THE UNIVERSITY
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Trading Design Education

a critical study of transnational academic partnerships

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THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Edinburgh
2021

Lay Summary of the Thesis

The central question driving this project is— *what is the value of a British design education in a social, economic, and cultural context different from its own?*

Rooted in the commodification of higher education, this doctoral project is a critical investigation of the global trade in transnational education services known as TNE and focuses on design education. Globalisation and communication technologies have enabled the fast-paced digital flow of information across global networks. This has led to the growth of TNE systems where students live in a country different from their degree-awarding institutes. Higher education services, not students, cross national borders.

Postcolonial discourse is used to explore established systems for facilitating TNE and the power structures embedded in them. As a theoretical framework, it questions global homogenisation and appreciates nuance in cultural specificities. Qualitative research methods, which allowed for collaboration with invited research participants, helped fill gaps in the existing literature on TNE, which tends to be uncritical and focused on quantitative data.

This thesis offers detailed insights on facilitating franchised education from the perspective of an institute that hosts British higher education services. The research focuses on the partnership between a university in Newcastle, England and a private design institute in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Several stakeholders involved in the franchise were invited to participate and offer views on policies, definitions, everyday facilitation, and learning in TNE systems. Data from the field includes the situated knowledge of academic staff, senior management, students, and graduates gathered during interviews, focus groups, and design workshops.

The study shows that for students who graduate and work in Sri Lanka, the value of their British design qualification is not in gaining skills to become global design practitioners. Based on participants' experiences, their transnational education helps develop the ability to think critically and facilitate reflective self-learning. The franchise partnership examined allows students to develop professional autonomy, which is crucial in creating change and shaping a local industry that does not acknowledge the economic or cultural value of design as a discipline. In acknowledgement of their ground realities, academic staff who facilitate TNE modify the prescribed system to adapt to their local context and the tacit knowledge, language, and creative skills of their students. These seen but unnoticed practices of academic staff occur in the margins of such educational systems and challenge the official definitions and frameworks of franchised programmes. However, they are critical in easing the flow of TNE services and need acknowledgement for further development.

Abstract

What is the value of a British design education in a social, economic, and cultural context different from its own?

Rooted in the commodification of higher education, this doctoral project is a critical investigation of the global trade in transnational education services known as TNE and focuses on design education. Globalisation and communication technologies have enabled the fast-paced digital flow of information across global networks, leading to the growth of TNE systems where students live in a country different from their degree-awarding institutes. Higher education services, not students, cross national borders.

Postcolonial discourse is used as a theoretical framework to explore established systems for facilitating TNE and critically evaluate the power structures embedded in them as it questions global homogenisation and appreciates nuance in cultural specificities. Methodologically, this project adopts a qualitative para-ethnographic or collaborative research approach to fill gaps in the existing literature on TNE which tends to be uncritical and focused on quantitative data.

This thesis offers in-depth insights on facilitating franchised education from the perspective of an institute that hosts British higher education services. The research focuses on the partnership between a university in Newcastle, England and a private design institute in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Diverse stakeholders involved in the franchise were invited to participate and offer views on policies, definitions, everyday facilitation, and learning in TNE systems. The empirical data includes the situated knowledge of academic staff, senior management, students, and graduates shared during interviews, focus groups, and participatory design workshops.

The study reveals that for TNE design students who graduate and practice in Sri Lanka, the value of their British educational qualification is not in gaining skills to become global design practitioners but in achieving the ability to think critically and facilitate reflective self-learning. The franchise partnership examined provides students with an opportunity to develop design agency which is crucial in devising courses of action to change and shape a local industry that does not acknowledge the economic or cultural value of design as a discipline. In acknowledgement of their ground realities, stakeholders involved in the facilitation of this TNE franchise modify the prescribed system to adapt to their local context and the tacit knowledge, language, and creative skills of their students. These seen but unnoticed practices of academic staff occur in the margins of such educational systems and challenge the official definition of franchised programmes. However, they are critical in easing the flow of TNE services and need acknowledgement for further development.

Acknowledgements

Over the past few years, many individuals have helped shape and refine this project and made an impact on my practice as a design researcher. First, I want to thank my supervisors: Ed Hollis, Rachel Harkness, and Sónia Matos, for their guidance, feedback, and suggestions, both academic and (pop) cultural.

This research would not have been possible if not for the generosity of my research participants in Colombo and Newcastle: Amanda, Amila, Ananya, Ayesha, Chaturi, Claire, Cole, Emma, Hugo, Gayathri, George, Janani, Kalpani, Lucy, Mary, Purvi, Roshan, Senuri, and Toby. Here, as elsewhere, I use pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of my participants; however, they know who they are. I also want to thank the Academy of Design, Sri Lanka and Northumbria University's School of Design for hosting me at their campus and taking an interest in my work and the graphic design students in both institutes who have contributed to this project.

To my friends and best pals spread across countries and continents: thank you! Finally, to my family for always playing along with my whims and, in this case, supporting me by footing the bill of a doctorate: the English language does not have the appropriate vocabulary to express my gratitude.

List of Figures & Tables

Glossary of Acronyms

AOD	Academy of Design (Sri Lanka)
D&AD	(British) Design and Art Direrctors
GATS	The General Agreement on Trade in Services
HEA	Higher Education Academy, now Advanced HE
ISTD	International Society of Typographic Designers
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
SLIA	Sri Lanka Institute of Architects
TNE	Transnational Education
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WTO	The World Trade Organisation

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Introduction

Moving around Colombo, the capital and commercial hub of Sri Lanka, you are likely to come across billboards on main roads and by-lanes which advertise opportunities to study abroad in destinations such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, or to enrol in classes for the International English Language Testing System to improve your language and communication skills. It is also common for such billboards to accompany signage featuring foreign academic institutions such as Middlesex University or the University of West London. Although I have lived in the United Kingdom for close to five years, I am yet to come across any form of advertising in London or Edinburgh persuading students to study in Sri Lanka at the University of Colombo or Moratuwa.

The export of educational services makes a significant contribution to the UK's economy, with revenue from education-related exports generating close to GBP 20 billion in 2016 (Gov.uk, 2019), making British higher education a lucrative international asset. In the context of commodification of educational services and the continuing trend of academic institutes functioning as private businesses rather than public institutions (Altbach, 2004; Knight, 2013), this thesis is a critical investigation of Britain's trade in transnational education services (TNE) from the perspective of one transnational institutional partnership between a university in Northern England and a private design institute in Sri Lanka.

My lived experiences of being a tuition-paying international student in the UK and a former transnational academic in Sri Lanka inform my interest to undertake this research while also giving me an insider's perspective. This project is rooted in the commodification of higher education, and as a self-funded Indian student at a university in Scotland, I am a consumer of educational services. After earning my MA in Graphic Design from Edinburgh College of Art, I moved to Sri Lanka to teach at the Academy of Design (AOD) in 2014. AOD is a private institute in Colombo in a franchised partnership with Northumbria University in Newcastle, England and offers BA (Hons) degree programmes in design to students based in and around Colombo.

The most engaging aspect of my academic practice at AOD was interpreting and re-framing a British design curriculum to make it contextually relevant for the South Asian student body and the local industry. However, there were limitations to this process. As academic staff, we were bound by the Northumbria University curriculum, which had a focus on making students employable in the British design industry. The rigidity of the franchise structure and its lack of acknowledgement of being situated in Sri Lanka led to my interest in further research on the development of such cross-border systems of higher education provision.

Based on my experiences as a paying consumer of higher education and a former facilitator of transnational higher education, the primary question this research explores is—

> *What is the value of a British design education in a social, economic, and cultural context different from its own?*

This research positions itself in a constructivist epistemological stance to understand how stakeholders involved and invested in transnational design education assign value to this type of service in their contextually specific ways. As a research paradigm under the umbrella of interpretivism, constructivism states that human beings actively construct knowledge "in their own subjective and intersubjective realities and in contextually specific ways" (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller 2014, p. 183). Adopting an interpretivist perspective as a researcher requires a belief that the social world is constructed by people (Williamson 2006). For me, this meant using research methods that allowed participants to share their subjective and purposive experiences in and understandings of transnational education in the first person.

Accordingly, this project adopted a qualitative, ethnomethodological approach which provided a framework to empirically investigate what different stakeholders invested in TNE consider to be of value and what motivates them to invest in this service. The notion of value is left open-ended to acknowledge that value is subjective and changes based on context and people. For example, as this research is rooted in the commodification of educational services, education, in this context, has a defined monetary value— the cost of tuition. Since TNE is a service available for purchase, it has an intended economic value which is the value of an asset calculated according to its ability to produce income in the future. By investing in educational services, students invest in their capacity to produce economic capital, which is directly convertible into money (Bourdieu 2019, p. 79).

Exploring notions of value and capital beyond an economic or monetary lens requires a broader definition. Sociologist and philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu has argued that there is more than one form of capital; in addition to economic capital, there is social and cultural capital, giving rise to symbolic forms of value (Bourdieu 2019; Neveu, 2018). For Bourdieu, the term capital suggests "a collection of goods and skills, of knowledge and acknowledgments, belonging to an individual or a group that he or she can mobilise to develop influence, gain power, or bargain other elements of this collection" (Neveu 2018, p. 1).

In the context of capital as a collection of skills and knowledge that can be mobilised to gain power and influence, one form of capital can be converted into other forms under certain conditions (ibid.). Bourdieu (2019, p. 80) gives the example of how educational qualifications are presumed to guarantee cultural capital, and by conferring institutional recognition, it is possible to compare qualification holders and exchange this form of capital for another. These forms of capital allude to capital as social relations between individuals which are complex and multifaceted. The work of the educational researcher Hart (2014), for instance, uses key concepts from Bourdieu as an analytical framework to understand students' aspirations and challenge the illusions of universal professional advantage and success promised to higher education applicants in Britain. She provides the example of how higher education and employment statistics do not consider social, economic, or cultural factors of students and graduates even though they impact their access to opportunities (ibid., p. 149).

Research Aims

My aim as a design researcher with an insider's perspective on TNE is to critically explore globalised education systems using the lens of postcolonial discourse to understand the proposed value of this type of educational service compared to the perceived value for those who facilitate and invest in them. I intend to do this by taking on the role of a transnational "cultural broker" (Copeland-Carson et al. 2012, p. 11), that is, a researcher who compiles empirical data on the functioning and outcomes of TNE from the perspective of diverse stakeholders engaged in a design education programme which requires translocal interactions.

In the context of this research, translocal interactions refer to actions and processes which transcend local and national boundaries; the actions or events at one place have an immediate impact on other connected places. For example, in TNE systems, the decisions of an institution exporting their educational curriculum across borders directly impact the everyday functioning of institutions hosting that curriculum. Translocal practices involving academic and economic exchanges as well as social networks that cross national boundaries constitute the everyday realities of facilitating a transnational design education.

Economic and cultural transactions between social groups and the global flow of commodities and culture used to be constrained by geography or involve long-distance journeys and long-term cultural traffic in the form of conquests (Appadurai, 1996). The explosion of and access to information technologies of the past century have eased the flow of economic and cultural exchange (ibid.). However, challenges still exist in facilitating a smooth flow of services in translocal settings, including TNE,

> The inherent instability of social relationships, the powerful tendency for local subjectivity itself to be commoditised, and the tendencies for nation-states, which sometimes obtain significant revenues from such sites, to erase internal, local dynamics through externally imposed modes of regulation, credentialisation, and image production (Appadurai 1996, p. 192).

Aligning with Appadurai's stated challenges of translocal practices, emergent themes developed as part of the ethnographic field research. First, the challenges that arise as a consequence of externally imposed institutional frameworks to regulate and validate a design programme that is developed in England and facilitated in Sri Lanka. Second, the uncertainty of social relationships created as a result of divergent local perceptions of design as a discipline and profession that affect students and graduates based in Sri Lanka. To understand the complex nature of translocal practices and experiences, the following secondary research questions helped frame lines of inquiry to gather theoretical and empirical insights on a transnational design programme that would not privilege the perspective of institutes exporting their educational services and offer locally grounded insights—

1. *How does knowledge really flow in TNE systems?*
2. *How do TNE systems acknowledge contextual specificities?*
3. *How does a TNE experience in design education provide access to communities of design practice?*

Identifying Gaps and Contributing to Knowledge

This research situates itself within scholarship on the effects of postcolonialism and globalisation on higher education through the example of a critical study of transnational design education using the theoretical framework of postcolonial discourse. Postcolonial discourse, that is, discourses that consist of reactions to, and analysis of, the cultural legacy of colonialism (Olaniyan, 1993), puts forth a basis for a less Eurocentric and a more comprehensive account of the effects of globalisation on higher education (Tikly, 1999). In this study, it provides a critical and theoretical lens to understand the power dynamics at play in the global knowledge industry and Britain's export of design higher education services in Sri Lanka from a social, economic, and cultural perspective. As suggested by Tikly (2001, p. 152), "postcolonial critique draws attention to the transnational aspects of globalisation and of social inequalities and seeks to highlight forms of resistance to Western global hegemony as they have manifested themselves in education," making it an appropriate critical lens for the study of a trade-based relationship between two academic institutions based in nations with a shared colonial history.

Chapter 1 of this thesis identifies a clear gap in knowledge of facilitating TNE from the perspective of institutes which host cross-border educational services. Research on the current landscape of British transnational education done in the first year of the project revealed a need for qualitative insights as the subject has predominantly been explored using quantitative methods and data produced by institutions and stakeholders based in countries that export their educational services abroad. Since TNE research is predominantly carried out by exporting nations, reports which inform policy and institutional practices privilege a global order in their favour, not acknowledging the hierarchical power relations perpetuated to sustain their market dominance. Additionally, while quantitative research methods provide options to gather data from diverse and geographically distant stakeholders involved in TNE, participant responses are limited by the prescribed structures or formats of data collection, limiting the space for spontaneous or reflective responses and critique.

Considering the gaps in knowledge identified, this project contributes to knowledge on transnational education and global design education and practice by using postcolonial discourses as an analytical and interpretive device in the following ways:

- By using postcolonial discourse as a theoretical framework in the study of transnational design education, this research mobilises and enriches the work of critical scholars such as Rizvi (2007; Rizvi et al., 2006), Said (2003), and Tikly (1999, 2001, 2004) by offering a critique of the neo-colonial nature of globalised education systems and how they flourish in a complex network of power imbalances and the historical desires of postcolonial societies.
- By adopting a qualitative research methodology that combines ethnographic and participatory design methods to gather data, this project offers novel empirical insights from the perspective of a TNE host institute or stakeholders who have previously not been included as epistemic partners in this area of research.
- Consequently, this project shares nuanced insights into facilitating a transnational design education programme in a postcolonial state by interweaving national, institutional, and personal motivations with contextual specificities. By analysing the insights using postcolonial discourses and conceptual frameworks,

this research reveals the complexities and hybrid practices that arise from cross-border flows of design knowledge requiring translocal interactions.

Thesis Overview

This thesis has seven chapters. While this study is about transnational design education, the first two chapters reveal the complex and multifaceted nature of the subject being researched. The initial chapters also define critical terms used throughout the thesis to discuss issues at the intersection of globalisation, the commodification of educational services, postcolonialism, and design. **Chapter 1** introduces the contextual landscape of the research topic; the evolving nature of transnational education as a product of globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education alongside trends in the trade of educational services. A literature review of TNE research and policy in Sri Lanka and the UK helps reveal the overarching motivations for engaging and investing in this form of education, identify concerns, and highlighting gaps in the current knowledge. The review also helps formulate the secondary research questions which frame the research.

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework of postcolonial discourse used to acknowledge the postcolonial context of Sri Lanka and critically examine the power structures of knowledge at a global level and within the discipline of design. The chapter also engages in discussion on the benefits of using postcolonial discourse to allow for a plurality of perspectives on TNE and its implications as a mode of critique. **Chapter 3** introduces the research methodology and the importance of adopting an interdisciplinary approach for the research design by blending participatory design methods with ethnography. The following chapters mark a shift in the thesis by presenting the empirical data gathered in the field in the form of images, texts, and verbal narratives supported by contextual literature to answer the secondary research questions by drawing on the findings.

Chapter 4 discusses the specificities of teaching and learning design and what constitutes design knowledge to foreground the complexities of facilitating a franchised design curriculum. The insights presented by participants involved in the facilitation and management of TNE address the secondary questions on how knowledge flows in TNE systems and how such systems acknowledge contextual specificities. The findings suggest that contrary to the defined frameworks of a TNE franchise, academic staff modify the prescribed curriculum to adapt to their local context and the tacit knowledge, language, and creative skills of their students to navigate the frictions present in the system.

By building on the insights from the previous chapter, **Chapter 5** addresses multiple points of friction in the everyday experience of facilitating TNE. The framework of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) helps explore the notion of individual and institutional agency to aid a smooth flow of educational services from England to Sri Lanka. The chapter also demonstrates how the research findings help build a case for supporting transnational communities of academic practice. Such communities would support emergent practices in TNE systems that currently occur in the margins and are not recognised.

Chapter 6 shifts the perspectives of findings to explore how a TNE experience in design education provides access to communities of design practice for students who engage and invest in this form of education. The chapter challenges the proposed value of a transnational design education in providing students with a globally recognised passport to practice anywhere in the world. By comparing the notion of a design portfolio being a passport to professional practice (Tovey, 2015) with the geopolitical system of passports as objects which assign identity and regulate mobility, the chapter argues that systems requiring passports perpetuate inequalities for education and professional practice.

Chapter 7 is a reflective discussion of this study's key findings and contribution to knowledge. By working through the key terms used throughout the thesis alongside the insights formed in response to the secondary research questions, I structure a response to the primary research question and its implications on transnational design education and the trade of educational services. The conclusion discusses how the critical study of the franchise partnership between AOD and Northumbria University contributes to scholarship on postcolonial studies by mobilising postcolonial concepts to offer contextually grounded perspectives on the value of transnational design education and its effect on professional design practice. The final section of the thesis addresses the research limitations and how they lead to possibilities for further research in the facilitation of TNE services and the development of a transnational design curriculum that is both adaptable and locally grounded.

Ch. 1 The Evolving Landscape of Transnational Education Systems

On a balmy afternoon in October 2018, I was surrounded by a diverse group of academics and industry professionals in the field of fashion and textile design in an air-conditioned conference room at the Mount Lavinia Hotel, a well-known colonial heritage hotel in Colombo, Sri Lanka. We had all gathered in Colombo to attend Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Sri Lanka, an event curated by AOD. While the others had travelled from places in Europe, North America, and Asia to witness what the local fashion and apparel industry had to offer, I was there for a preliminary research trip. On that day, everyone had gathered for a forum on design education and participate in a roundtable discussion to consider the following question— *what does the fashion industry want/need?* For the discussion session, my former colleagues at AOD had asked me to take notes. The group I was assigned was discussing the topic from the perspective of the industry. Two other groups were exploring the question from the perspective of educators and students.

The leading proposal made by my group was further integration of industry and education. A few suggestions included the fashion industry co-financing education, allowing for a fluid curriculum that adapts to the industry's changing needs and developing a *competitive sustainability mindset* that could foster a sustainable ethos rather than criteria. Select recommendations from the other groups were: developing ethics for academic-industry collaborations at scale; having a universal credit system that allowed students to transfer between institutions; and having academic staff with real-world experience. The last point meant reducing the focus on PhDs and research outputs as hiring qualifications in academic institutions in favour of industry experience. Witnessing these discussions by a group of experts strategically curated by the founder of AOD left the impression that the institute was an advocate for the corporatisation of higher education and aligned with neoliberal values of a free market negotiating human actions.

To understand the scope and evolving nature of transnational education (TNE) as a subject, we begin with an introduction to the development of transnational design education as a product of globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education. In the academic year 2018-19, there were 666,815 students enrolled in British higher education courses through programmes delivered overseas (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2020b). In comparison, in the same year, 485,645 international students were enrolled in British higher education programmes on campus (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2020c). These statistics show that the UK reaches more international students through TNE than courses taught within the country and signify the importance of this particular system to the UK's higher education sector.

The following sections draw on the critical voices of two academics who have done extensive research on the commodification of education and the impact of globalisation on higher education systems: Philip G. Altbach, the founding director of the Centre for International Higher Education at Boston College (Altbach 2004; 2015; Altbach and Knight 2007); and Jane Knight, Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto whose research focuses on the international dimension of higher education at the institutional, national, regional and international levels (Knight, 2002; 2013;

2016; Knight and McNamara, 2017). Their work helps define various terminologies used in this thesis as well as providing critical insights of the issues surrounding the trade of educational services.

In order to discuss TNE, this chapter begins with a discussion of the definitions adopted for the terms *globalisation* and the *internationalisation* of higher education. This is to clarify, at the outset, how key concepts are being interpreted in this thesis and provide a contextual background to understand the current landscape of this particular system of cross-border education and its global impact. The contextual background is followed by a review of policy reports and systems designed by various private and public organisations engaged in the growth and facilitation of such educational services.

As this research is interested in exploring the value of a British design education in Sri Lanka, the literature explored in this chapter spans the period from 2001 to the present day to identify issues and methods that researchers and organisations invested in British TNE have considered to be of consequence. The review examines publications by the following organisations: the British Council; the UK's Higher Education Academy; the India Design Council; and the National Education Commission of Sri Lanka. The validity of the literature review is based on identifying recurring themes from multiple sources to identify gaps in the existing research. The chapter concludes with an articulation of the problem statement based on the identification of knowledge gaps found in the literature and a statement of the research objectives.

1.1 Trading Educational Services: Definitions and Terminology

The term *globalisation* encompasses a wide range of phenomena associated with the growing connectivity of people and communities around the world (Copeland-Carson et al. 2012, p. 11). As a concept, globalisation is relevant to many disciplines, leading to different meanings and contested definitions. Some scholars argue that globalisation is a process rather than an end state (Giddens, 1990; Hoogvelt, 1997). Giddens argues that globalisation is a consequence of European modernity and involves a unifying process of "uneven development that fragments as it coordinates" (1990, p. 175) to create an interdependent world where there are no *others* since distant localities are linked by global social relations. From a socio-economic perspective, Hoogvelt (1997, p. 131), suggests globalisation is "a social phenomenon that drives cross-border economic integration to new levels of intensity". Since people can have social relations and organised communities regardless of a shared physical space, the time/space compression permits the emergence of "imagined communities, cultures, and even systems of authority and social control" which cross borders and create shared phenomenal worlds (ibid., p. 120).

Giddens and Hoogvelt's positions of globalisation as a process of flow and movement to overcome space to facilitate the worldwide diffusion of modernity are reflected in the development of transnational and cross-border education systems. However, opposing the position of globalisation being a consequence of European modernity, Escobar (2004, 2008) argues that modernity and globalisation are linked to colonisation and economic exploitation of non-European areas and should be oriented towards the politics of place. He suggests moving beyond modernity and looking at differences made evident when local communities confront neoliberal globalisation (2004). Escobar

uses the term *meshworks* to describe place-based social movements that comprise self-organised, non-hierarchical groups that "develop through their encounter with their environments" (Escobar 2008, p. 274) to propose and pursue alternates to modernity.

Turning to scholarship on the effects of globalisation on higher education (Altbach 2004; Altbach and Knight 2007; Knight 2004), the term globalisation is understood as the broad economic, technological, scientific, political, and cultural trends which directly affect education systems (Altbach 2004, p.5). In this thesis, the concept of globalisation is enmeshed within Gidden's notion of modernity and universalism which involves an ongoing process of creating networks that facilitate global connections and the flow of information in an environment where "the international dimension of higher education is becoming more important and significantly changing" (Knight 2004, p.8). However, Chapter 5 also explores notions of self-organised social movements that challenge hegemonic frameworks of TNE and align with Escobar's notion of a meshwork.

According to Knight, "internationalisation is changing the world of higher education, and globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation" (2004, p. 5). *Internationalisation* in the context of higher education is an evolving notion without a universal definition which will be applicable to every country, culture, and education system (ibid.). However, for a frame of reference, this thesis adopts the definition of internationalisation as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight 2003, p.2).

Knight's definition here highlights critical elements of the concept: first, the term *process* conveys that internationalisation is an ongoing, continuing, and evolving effort. The terms *international*, *intercultural*, and *global dimension* used together reflect the breadth of educational internationalisation. International implies the relationships between and among nations, cultures, or countries whereas the term intercultural addresses the diversity of cultures that exists within countries, communities, and institutions. The term global implies the worldwide scope of this institutional process (Knight 2004, p. 11).

There are many options for higher education internationalisation: student and staff exchange through mobility across national borders; transnational academic partnerships; or inclusion of foreign pedagogies and curriculum to name a few. The term *transnational* in academic partnerships is used to imply across nations and does not specifically address the notion of relationships, therefore, transnational is often used interchangeably and in the same way as borderless or cross-border (Knight 2004, p.8). TNE is one type of institutional internationalisation and can be an exclusive form of institutional internationalisation or work in tandem with other methods. As a system of trade in educational services, it is part of a growing trend of education becoming a commodity to be purchased by a consumer in order to build skillsets to be used in a highly competitive global market or a product to be bought and sold by multinational corporations and academic institutions for profit (Altbach, 2015).

Globalisation and the internet have expanded the flow and dissemination of

knowledge (Altbach 2015, p. 2; Sen 2002); transnational higher education continues to expand mainly due to the limitless use of new information technologies in providing educational services in all parts of the globe (UNESCO/ Council of Europe and, 2001). In 2001, in recognition of a growing trend of information technologies being used for trading educational services in a seemingly borderless world, the Council of Europe and UNESCO held a convention to create a "Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education". The Code provides definitions for the various terminology associated with such systems of higher education where education services, rather than students, cross national borders. TNE is defined as,

> All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates or may operate independently of any national education system (UNESCO/ Council of Europe, 2001).

An awarding institution in this context is a higher education institution which issues degrees, diplomas, certificates or other qualifications to students accessing education services which can consist of study programme or parts of a course of study that leads, after successful completion, to a qualification.

The trade of educational services across national borders is a relatively new but complex system with multiple stakeholders involved (UNESCO/ Council of Europe, 2001). For example, the provision of higher education programmes through transnational arrangements may involve the following: academic institutions which provide educational services outside their country of origin; teaching staff, regardless of their country of origin, who work in institutions established through transnational arrangements; students, regardless of their country of origin, who engage in courses which lead to higher education qualifications in an institution established through a transnational arrangement; agents who act as brokers or recruiters in transnational arrangements; and other stakeholders, such as employers and the public at large who may be interested in the quality of higher education qualifications.

The stakeholders who facilitate and invest in TNE are a part of the global knowledge industry, and the continuous growth of trade in education services is a tangible manifestation of being part of what has come to be known in the field of education and human development as the "Knowledge Society" (Altbach and Knight 2007, p. 290). A society which requires the participation of highly educated people for economic growth and development in all parts of the world (ibid.). The Knowledge Society's dependence on highly educated people to forward national economic growth has led to the creation of a global higher education market with education becoming a prized commodity for trade. However, these trends have implications on the ownership and transmission of knowledge as well as modern citizenship.

1.2 The Global Flow of Educational Services

The general commodification of education at a global level has resulted in several trends: the growing number of private for-profit entities providing higher education

opportunities domestically and internationally; the use of information and communications technologies for domestic and cross-border delivery of programs; the increasing costs and tuition fees faced by students at public and private institutions; and the need for public institutions to seek alternate sources of funding, which sometimes means engaging in for-profit activities or seeking private-sector sources of financial support (Knight 2015, p. 5).

The effect of globalisation on higher education is visible in the global trend of increasing trade in services rather than products. The World Trade Organisation now includes education as one of the service sectors in the General Agreement on Trade in Services or GATS (World Trade Organisation, 2013). GATS was created in recognition of the global growth of trade in services for economic development. Services, rather than physical products, have become the most dynamic segment of international trade (ibid.).

In the context of the GATS, trade in services is defined as the supply of a service. The Agreement classifies education along with ten other service sectors, including business, financial, and communication services as a core service sector (World Trade Organisation 2013, p. 4). Altbach describes GATS as "an effort by multinational corporations and governments of certain wealthy nations to integrate higher education into the legal structures of global trade through the World Trade Organisation" (2004, p. 5). The classification of education services as a core sector for global trade indicates the export of higher education as a lucrative business which in turn demonstrates the importance of universities and the financial power of those who sell education services.

In a context of borderless-ness or the removal of geographic barriers, the method of services trade under GATS varies depending on the territorial presence of the supplier and the consumer at the time of transaction (World Trade Organisation 2013, p. 3). The following list, based on the GATS Modes of Supply (ibid.), exemplifies four modes of trade in services from the perspective of a consumer or importing nation called X:

- Mode 1: Consumers located in X receive services from abroad through communication technologies. Examples by the WTO include distance training, research reports, and consultancy.
- Mode 2: Nationals of X have moved abroad and consume services abroad. Examples include students in a university or tourists.
- Mode 3: Nationals in X get access to services by a locally established affiliate, subsidiary, or office of a foreign owned and controlled company. Examples of commercial presence include local branches of foreign banks and hotel groups.
- Mode 4: A foreign national provides services in X in person as an independent supplier or an employee of a foreign service firm. Examples of the two instances include working as an independent consultant or health worker or an employee of a foreign consultancy or hospital.

The internationalisation of higher education can involve every mode of trade included in the GATS (Altbach and Knight 2007, p. 291). TNE involves Mode 1 with a parent academic institute, such as Northumbria University sending its educational services to a host institute in another country, such as the Academy of Design, using

information technologies. The international mobility of students, academics, and researchers involves Mode 2; as an Indian enrolled in a doctoral programme at a university in Scotland, I am an active stakeholder in this mode of trade in educational services. The setup of university branch campuses overseas and joint ventures with local institutions involves Mode 3 and staff mobility in the form of faculty who move across borders to deliver academic courses temporarily in person is classified under Mode 4.

1.2.1 Education, Development, and Financial Gain

There are many motives for the internationalisation of higher education. Altbach and Knight (2007) claim that in addition to enhancing research and knowledge capacity, monetary gains have become a key motive for internationalisation in corporatized as well as traditional non-profit universities. One reason for internationalisation for profit is decreased public funding and increasing operational costs in an environment of increased accountability and global competition at public education institutes (Knight 2004). Traditional modes of internationalisation such as study-abroad experiences or strengthened foreign-language instruction are rarely a profit-making activity, though they may enhance the competitiveness, prestige, and strategic alliances of an institute (ibid.). Internationalisation through foreign student mobility, on the other hand, is an established income generator for universities since most international students pay for their studies and at a higher price than domestic students, producing significant income for the host institutions and the countries they are in (Altbach, 2004).

While international higher education initiatives exist in almost every country, the developed English-speaking nations and, to a lesser extent, the larger EU countries are considered as leaders of international student mobility, reaping the financial benefits of hosting international students (Altbach and Knight 2007, p. 294). The bulk of students who travel abroad and pay for their education are usually from Asian and Latin American middle-income countries and, to a lesser extent, the poorer nations of the developing world that cannot meet the growing demand for higher education domestically (ibid.).

In 2018, the British Council forecasted international student mobility in terms of students travelling aboard to study at foreign institutions in major international student destinations such as the UK, USA, and Australia to slow down. The forecast suggests that universities in these countries that are dependent on international student mobility for institutional internationalisation will have to rely on alternate means such as transnational education, research collaborations, and corporate partnerships (British Council, 2018). One reason for dwindling international student mobility is the setup of high-quality higher education institutes in Asian countries such as Malaysia and China (Bothwell, 2018). These institutions allow students to remain in their home countries and attract regional students who would have traditionally gone to the West for their higher education.

The GATS was created to contribute to the expansion of trade in services, including education, “under conditions of transparency and progressive liberalisation and

as a means of promoting the economic growth of all trading partners, and the development of developing countries" (World Trade Organisation 2013, p. 2). To acknowledge critical voices against the capitalist agenda of limitless trade expansion and growth, the WTO alleges the GATS is merely an instrument to promote growth and development at a global scale (ibid.). The study of relations among "international actors of unequal wealth" includes the metaphorical concept of development (Marks 2018, p. 39). The term development when used as an adjective, for example, developed and developing, alludes to a geographic region's industrial capability, technological sophistication, and economic productivity (ibid., p. 40). When researching relationships between "developed" and "less developed" regions, the implications of development are value-laden. For example, extensive economic productivity and technological sophistication is considered to be a desirable quality and a lack of productivity to be less so (ibid., p. 41). Treaties such as the GATS promote the message that a nation will only become developed when it shows growth in terms of economic productivity and technological progress.

Globalisation and the commodification of education may provide access to higher education services to people in places classified as developing nations. However, it does not assure social or economic growth since economic activity does not follow a linear logic of development (Marks 2018, p. 42). Instead, facilitating development is an "intervention in nonlinear and complex adaptive systems" (ibid.) which allude to chaos where a multitude of variables can impact the desired outcome. In the context of educational services being packaged as a private commodity for purchase, although both Britain and Sri Lanka are members of the WTO, the UK's gross national income per capita stood at 48,040 US dollars in the year 2019. In contrast, in Sri Lanka, it stood at 13,230 USD (World Bank, 2020). Therefore, the purchasing power for commodified educational services of the average citizen in one nation is significantly more than in the other, making TNE services affordable to a select few in places like Sri Lanka.

For a Knowledge Society, where accessible higher education is an essential part of contributing to a nation's economic growth, discussing the economic value of design as a discipline is essential to understand the motivation of stakeholders who choose to invest in privatised design education. The following section discusses how the perception of design and its economic value can negatively affect design as a discipline and design education.

1.2.2 The Effect of Social and Institutional Structures on Design

AOD is a part of Design Corp, a privately-owned business that describes itself as "a conglomerate of brands, organisations and institutions" which creates a "complete ecosystem of businesses built upon design-led innovation" to "impact transformative development for Sri Lanka" and the South Asian region (DesignCorp, 2020). During an interview, a former member of AOD's senior management team spoke of how, as a transnational design institute, their purpose was to "grow an economy" and establish value for things which are designed and made in Sri Lanka (Claire, Interview, February 13, 2019). As an academic institute embedded in a business enterprise, AOD has a vision to engage creativity with business to stimulate economic development inspired by neo-liberal ideologies of entrepreneurialism and integrating the world market by processes of financialisation (Stern and Siegelbaum, 2019).

In the context of design education leading to economic growth and development, some scholars have argued that design and economics are often perceived as poor bedfellows (Heskett, 2015; Julier, 2017). The acknowledgement of such a perception is essential as it has implications on design education in Sri Lanka, a nation with a nascent creative industry. Julier (2017, p. 2) suggests that viewing the world with an economic lens is to look for certainties and statistics to get a clearer view of global and local events; design, on the other hand, is about imagining possible ways of living and functioning in the world. In line with Julier's definition of design, Simon (2001) has stated that design is to devise courses of action to change existing situations into preferred ones. These definitions suggest that the basic premise of the disciplines of economics and design are opposing, "one tries to demonstrate the knowable; the other is constantly pushing towards the unknowable" (Julier 2017, ch. 1, p. 2).

Design historian and economist John Heskett has argued that the discipline of design has a further challenge of not having a clear, codified knowledge system. Instead, as a creative practice, it is more concerned with the act of making and tacit knowledge where expertise is a result of cumulative experience (Heskett, 2015). Over time, creative knowledge and ability becomes in-built, which is hard to rationalise. Heskett argues that this makes the economic relevance and institutional awareness of the discipline challenging to conceive and encourage since there is little value placed on "accumulation and codification of collective experience" (ibid., p. 105). Even though their expertise is hard to rationalise in terms of economic value, designers must function within institutional structures which can enable or constrain their work (Heskett 2015, p. 96).

Institutional structures such as intellectual property laws can benefit design practice by safeguarding innovation and encouraging designers to generate economic value through the creation of products and services. At the same time, social structures can restrict the growth of design practice. Heskett gives the following examples of institutional influences that need consideration to facilitate the growth of design practices: the general cultural climate of a society; the way design is manifested in public and private institutions; whether design is taught at all levels of the educational system; how design is taught; and the immediate context of the firms in which designers work (Heskett, 2015). As a private design institute, AOD has to address most of these institutional restrictions. They reveal themselves in the empirical narratives shared in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 when examining the facilitation of a transnational design curriculum in Sri Lanka and the professional practice of design in the local industry.

1.3 Facilitating TNE: A Review of Reports and Policy Documents

In line with the financial motives for investing in higher education internationalisation, there is a growing body of literature examining the present state and future potential of British TNE. Although there are international Codes and Guidelines for cooperation and the provision of TNE (UNESCO/ Council of Europe, 2001; UNESCO and Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development 2005), these codes are voluntary and do not set official standards to be followed by any nations or stakeholders involved. This section presents a review of select literature on TNE (Figure 1), interweaving a South Asian perspective with that of a British one to illustrate the overarching motivations and research being undertaken at a national level to identify concerns and reveal gaps in current knowledge. The importance of

*Now called Advance HE

Organisations Invested in TNE Research

British Council
Higher Education Academy*
India Design Council
National Education Commission Sri Lanka
Universities UK International Unit

Select Literature Reviewed

Reports, Classification Frameworks, and Tooklits

- British Council and German Academic Exchange Service, 2014. Impacts Of Transnational Education On Host Countries
- British Council and Universities UK International Unit, 2016. The Scale And Scope Of UK Higher Education Transnational Education.
- British Council and India Design Council, 2016. The Future of Design Education in India.
- British Council and German Academic Exchange Service, 2017. TNE: A Classification Framework And Data Collection Guidelines For International Programme And Provider Mobility
- Knight, J. 2016. Transnational Education Remodeled: Toward a Common TNE Framework and Definitions
- National Education Commission Sri Lanka, 2009. National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education.
- Smith, K. 2017. Transnational Education: Toolkit.
- Smith, K. 2020, Engaging in Transnational Education, Critical Publishing, St Albans.
- Stephen, F. 2007. Relevance of Foreign Degrees Offered Locally and Their Contribution to the Socio-Economic Development of Sri Lanka.

Key Themes Identified

Motivations for TNE · Scope for TNE · Defining TNE
Quality Assurance · Impact of TNE

Figure 1 Literature Reviewed on Transnational Design Education.

investigating the current state of TNE, I argue, lies in the fact that research on the topic will inform future policy.

The publications selected for review include guidelines and toolkits for facilitating various forms of TNE as well as reports which detail terminology, scope, and considerations for building transnational academic collaborations. The select publications span the period from 2014 to the present day to identify current issues that organisations invested in British TNE have considered to be of importance and the review identifies recurring themes from multiple sources.

1.3.1 Defining TNE

There are several terms used synonymously for transnational education, cross-border, offshore, and borderless education (British Council and German Academic Exchange Service, 2017; British Council and McNamara Economic Research, 2013). Nevertheless, with international academic mobility continuously evolving, it is a dynamic sphere of the knowledge industry, making it hard to define. Therefore, there is no universally accepted definition of TNE. Countries engaged in the service adopt definitions which suit their perspective (Smith 2020, p. 3).

Knight (2016) claims there is confusion within and among countries about what is meant by TNE in general and the different modes of TNE in particular with a diversity of labels used to describe the same types of TNE activity. Conversely, the same label is often applied to a variety of different TNE activities (ibid.). The lack of a universally accepted and adopted definition of TNE is considered to be problematic by the countries which export TNE services as it limits the capacity for collecting accurate data and monitoring TNE trends (British Council and McNamara Economic Research, 2013; Knight 2016). This, in turn, has further impact on the enabling policies and regulatory frameworks for future implementation (ibid.).

National data collection systems on TNE programs and enrolment are scarce in most host countries (Knight 2016, p. 45); however, the United Kingdom is one of the few countries with a comprehensive national database on TNE offered in other countries (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2020a). With countries sending or exporting their education services abroad also being the ones who produce the most data, definitions of TNE services created by institutions generating this data have arguably become biased towards sending higher education institutes perspective (British Council and McNamara Economic Research 2013, p. 15). Having definitions that are biased in favour of countries sending or exporting their educational services falls short of the UNESCO guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education which call for frameworks to include the perspective of the sending *and* receiving institutions (UNESCO/ Council of Europe, 2001; UNESCO and Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development 2005).

According to this literature, there are various modes of TNE delivery undertaken by British higher education institutions (British Council and McNamara Economic Research 2013; British Council and Universities UK International Unit, 2016):

- Distance and online learning, e.g., either with or without local support.
- Physical presence in the form of an international branch campus or faculty flying

in to the host institute from the home campus to teach in person.
- Local delivery partnerships in the form of franchise or twinning programmes; articulation agreements; dual degree programmes; joint degree programmes; and validation programmes.

The British Council in collaboration with the German Academic Exchange Service (2014 and 2017) and academics such as Jane Knight (2016) have invested considerable time and resources on developing a conceptual classification framework for TNE to make distinctions between different forms or types of TNE activities. Knight (2016) admits that any TNE framework must make sense conceptually while being relevant and flexible for both sending and host countries to accommodate institutions at varying stages of TNE development. However, classification frameworks being developed by the British Council in collaboration with Knight (Knight and McNamara, 2017) only involve the participation of nations hosting TNE services in the capacity of consultants rather than co-authors.

A lack of equality between sending and host nations and institutions in articulating definitions or frameworks for TNE provision become especially problematic when modes of TNE delivery are delineated on the basis of whether there is collaborative or independent provision. For example, the favoured method of local partnership delivery for British higher education institutes is through a franchised programme also known as a twinning programme. The British Council defines a franchise programme as one where—

> A sending higher education institute (HEI) authorises a host HEI to deliver its (sending HEI) programme, with no curricular input by the host institution. The qualification is awarded, and quality assured by the sending institution. The host HEI has primary responsibility for delivery of the programme, but the sending HEI may assist with delivery of the programme by providing flying teaching faculty. Recruitment of students and provision of facilities (library, classrooms, IT) is provided by the host HEI. Franchise programmes are typically 3+0 or 4+0 with all study taking place in the host country (British Council and McNamara Economic Research 2013, p. 15).

Using Knight's TNE framework as a reference (2016, p. 44), the above definition aligns with an independent mode of TNE provision where, from the host country's perspective, the local provider is not involved in the design of the academic programme and the curriculum and qualifications are offered by the foreign sending institution. In contrast, a toolkit funded by the UK's Higher Education Academy (now known as Advance HE) and authored by Smith, a TNE practitioner, describes a franchise as a TNE partner who delivers a foreign degree on behalf of an institution, where the two courses are "closely aligned" (Smith 2017, p.6). Unlike the above definition by the British Council, there is a sense of flexibility and autonomy for the host institutes delivering the foreign qualification with the specifics of facilitation remaining open to interpretation.

The current definitions of TNE are one-sided as such systems are being defined by institutes who are invested in the export of curriculum abroad rather than those invested in hosting foreign curriculum locally. On the one hand, organisations such

as the British Council identify that countries hosting TNE services have not produced definitions for TNE and lack mechanisms for robust data collection on TNE provision (British Council and McNamara Economic Research 2013, p. 13; British Council and German Academic Exchange Service 2017, Preface). However, none of the literature by organisations in the UK invested in this research include institutes, organisations, or academics from their partner nations as equal contributors.

The 2017 framework referenced above, for example, states input from "national agencies in over thirty countries" which facilitated "discourse, information exchange and sharing of views and ideas" amongst participants (British Council and German Academic Exchange Service 2017, p. 41). However, the report is authored by Knight and McNamara representing the interests of the British Council and German Academic Exchange Service. While there is an acknowledgement that "no one size fits all" for TNE provision (British Council and Universities UK International Unit 2016, p. 12); the current attempts to create universally accepted definitions of such services are articulated by sending nations. This arguably leads to data collection frameworks biased in their favour rather than those of nations that host TNE.

1.3.2 Motivations for Engaging in TNE in Britain and Sri Lanka

According to Smith (2020, p. 13), there are four levels of motivations for engaging in TNE: global, national, institutional, and at the individual or practitioner level. Although the drivers for engagement will be different at each level, they are dynamic as TNE is continually evolving, requiring the relationships of TNE partners to evolve accordingly (ibid.). Smith states three national drivers for engaging in TNE: export revenue; capacity development for national higher education systems; and as a provider of societal benefits (2020, p. 16).

From a national perspective, in the UK, the British Council, Universities UK, and the Higher Education Academy (HEA) are organisations at the forefront of funding research and fostering partnerships to develop the internationalisation of the UK's higher education systems. In line with previous discussions on financial profit being a motivation for higher educational internationalisation, the main drivers for TNE provision for British higher education institutes are increasing student numbers, increasing institutional reputation, and increasing income (British Council and Universities UK International Unit 2016, p. 70). Additional motivations include creating new institutional relationships, developing existing institutional relationships, and accessing new markets for TNE provision (ibid.).

In contrast to the developed higher education sector in the UK, in some countries, the demand for higher education far outstrips the supply. Several sources (Badat, 2016; British Council and India Design Council 2016; Smith 2007 and 2020, Stephen 2007) elaborate this point for the South Asian context where governments and public universities are unable to keep up with the growing demand for higher education services and have developed their private education provision to cope. A quarter of the world's population lives in the nine countries which make up South Asia: India; Pakistan; Bangladesh; Iran; Afghanistan; Nepal; Sri Lanka; Bhutan; and the Maldives; with a median age of 28 years (Worldometer, 2020). Incidentally, UK TNE delivery is concentrated in Asia, which accounts for half of all TNE student numbers (Universities UK, 2020).

At a national level, Sri Lanka welcomes foreign academic collaborations as there is a demand for such services. For instance, in the academic year 2018-19, there were 28,315 students in Sri Lanka engaged in some form of British TNE provision (Universities UK, 2020). A 2007 World Bank-funded study by the National Education Commission of Sri Lanka examined the relevance of foreign degrees being offered locally in terms of their socio-economic contribution. According to the report, hosting TNE services in Sri Lanka is a driver for providing societal benefits by offering opportunities for tertiary education in information technology, banking, management, and finance for those who do not get accepted to public universities (Stephen, 2007). Although the report claims such courses are consistent with employment trends in the local labour market, it does not offer hard data on the local employment sector to back the claim. Additionally, students engaging in TNE pay for the educational services, which is not the case in public institutions, leading to conditions of inequality since only those who can afford it get access.

In 2020, the Sri Lankan government planned to liberalise higher education by reforming the existing public and private education sectors (Fernando, 2020). The proposal aims to open the country to international branch campuses by establishing a free education investment zone which will provide tax breaks for international universities under the condition that their academic staff also support local universities (ibid.). The proposal has received public criticism as its objective is to profit from educational services rather than increase the access to educational opportunities locally as the international branch campuses would cater to international students and non-resident Sri Lankan students who can pay in foreign currency (Bothwell, 2020). The criticism is understandable since less than five per cent of enrolments would be reserved for Sri Lankan students with scholarships (Fernando, 2020).

In addition to concerns related to liberalising higher education, Appadurai (2012, p. 637) claims there is a constant struggle in developing countries of quality versus quantity in measuring educational investment and output. He argues that creating higher education institutes which fit within the dynamics of global economic competition is one aspect of the struggle. The other, more challenging aspect is balancing the need for research excellence, global quality standards, and liberal learning which can advance public participation and debate against the pressures of offering tertiary education opportunities to the masses to create a skilled workforce for economic development (ibid.). Through the formation of a free education investment zone, the Sri Lankan government appears to be developing policies which create an import revenue from educational services by catering to regional international students, aiming for financial growth rather than social and economic development through local higher education opportunities.

1.3.3 Transnational Design Education

As mentioned, there are various modes of TNE delivery undertaken by British higher education institutions across various levels of study, offering a wide range of disciplines for study across the globe. Business and management courses are the most popular, followed by social science and law, engineering and technology, arts and humanities, medicine, education, and science (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2020b, p. 51). The actual provision of TNE, depending on the type of partnership

with a host institute, can involve the following: curriculum development, quality assurance, assessment, staff development, academic support, learning resources, teaching, pastoral support, and provision of buildings and infrastructure.

The scope and scale of TNE is vast and multifaceted; this project focuses on transnational design education. Literature on UK TNE provision in design; a niche sub-sector of a large field, is limited. However, the 2016 study on the shape of global higher education cited in the previous sections included two short case studies of UK TNE provision in Art and Design courses which provide an initial point of reference (British Council and Universities UK International Unit, 2016). The first case study highlights Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland which has two international branch campuses in Dubai and Malaysia offering students the opportunity to study programmes in Textiles and Interior Design in addition to a host of other disciplines. Heriot-Watt's TNE provision through international branch campuses was considered a success for having a "whole institutional approach" where the different campuses support one another to help develop the local economies of Dubai and Malaysia with the support of alumni groups, professional bodies, and the national government (ibid., p. 41).

The second case study showcased a validation partnership between Goldsmiths, University of London and LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore (British Council and Universities UK International Unit, 2016). Goldsmiths was commended for having a flexible, strategic approach embracing all forms of TNE to enable the right agreements to be made with the right partners around the world (ibid., 43). For their partnership with LASALLE, this meant ensuring "strong quality assurance" by national agencies in both countries and developing robust review systems including external peer-review, internal moderation by academic links, annual and periodic partnership and programme reviews, and moderation by external examiners (ibid.). The report classifies the two-page success stories as "case studies", however, they do not provide any detail of subject based methods or processes to enable the successful and facilitation of TNE partnerships, particularly in design education.

In the same year as the 2016 study on the shape of global higher education, the British Council partnered with the India Design Council to publish a report on the future of design higher education in India. The objective was to provide recommendations for potential collaborations between the UK and Indian design education institutions (British Council, India Design Council, 2016). Within the discipline of design, the domains considered in the report were furniture design, graphic design, motion graphics, animation and new media design, industrial design, automotive design, toy design, exhibition design, lifestyle product design, retail design, user experience, user interface, and human-computer interaction (ibid., p. 7). The report suggests a growing demand for design services in India alongside a growing number of local design institutions meeting the demand for students' aspirations to "pursue alternative careers" (ibid., p. 6). This student demand was seen as an opportunity for international collaborations for UK universities as Indian students show "increasing interest in international mobility and other aspects of collaborative programmes" (ibid.).

The report makes several suggestions for British universities for future prospects

to develop partnerships with local design institutes. For instance, opportunities for faculty development, developing master's and PhD programmes for the advancement of design knowledge, and nurturing existing partnerships by strengthening institutional relationships by developing "virtual learning communities among the staff and students" (ibid., p. 31). The last point was a method put forward to provide students and faculty in India with direct access to faculty in the UK. At an institutional level, the report also mentions that universities in the UK could bring in their experience and expertise in areas of design which are as of yet underdeveloped in India: design management, strategic design, and interdisciplinary design (ibid.).

At a national level, the report suggests creating "bilateral activities" (ibid., p. 31) such as transnational design exhibitions and competitions to bring students from the UK and India to work together. Another recommendation was having a website dedicated to disseminating information about possible TNE partnerships and a platform for British design institutes to share best practices in teaching, developing industry partnerships, and more. The central insight revealed is that in its current state, Indian design education is unable to provide opportunities to prospective students even though there is an apparent demand due to increased awareness of the field and possibilities for future employment. The report concludes on a positive note for interested institutional partners in the UK, claiming that several private higher education institutes established through international collaborations have been set up. Additionally, there was an indication by most participating education institutes supporting internationalisation to enhance learning and teaching.

Although the report acknowledges India's "rich culture and a well-developed craft tradition" informing the local design practice and education (ibid., p. 9), it dismisses notions of knowledge exchange between the two nations. Instead, the focus is on opportunities for one-way transfers of knowledge from the UK to India and the UK's potential opportunity for trade in design education services with a country with rapid economic development, a young population, and an expanding education sector.

This research focuses on the franchise partnership between AOD and Northumbria University. Like any other franchise arrangement, an academic franchise involves a primary institution granting authority to another institution to host its educational services for a fee. In the context of Northumbria University and AOD, the partnership offers students based in Colombo the opportunity to earn a "100% internal UK degree" (AOD, 2020). According to Killick (2015, p. 8), models of offshore higher education, including franchises, are predominantly based on the flow of economic capital from poorer to richer countries. Most international students from the Global South, which comprise of nations categorised as developing ones (UN/DESA, 2014), pay for their studies, creating income for countries selling their higher education services and a drain on the economy of the developing world (Altbach 2004, p. 12).

The motivation for British academic institutions to engage in TNE partnerships highlighted in the previous section stated three main drivers for TNE provision: increasing student numbers; increasing institutional reputation; and increasing income (UK Higher Education International Unit, 2017, p. 70). The last motivating driver was reinforced during an interview with a member of Northumbria University's

senior management who had over ten years of experience engaging in TNE,

> I'm not even going to get into the murky water of money, finance, how that whole economy works. It's a very important part of it, because why would an institute engage in it if there wasn't some sort of financial reward at the end of it? (Interview, September 18, 2019).

The commodification of higher education makes finance departments influential stakeholders in the decision-making process of transnational partnerships. As discussed, AOD is an entrepreneurial enterprise called Design Corp, making the institute a private academic business (Section 1.2.2). The murky waters of financing the partnership between Northumbria University and AOD were clarified to me by a member of AOD's staff,

> In a franchise, we pay per student, per year a fairly large chunk of hard currency in a world where the Sri Lankan rupee gets weaker and weaker every day. I would say that the Design Corp finance team has more power over this (partnership) than anybody who actually works at AOD (Interview, February 14, 2019).

This type of financial arrangement for TNE validation and franchise partnerships is standard according to a 2015 guide for British universities to create TNE partnerships in India (HE Global 2015, p. 27). At the time, the average remittance received by British universities per registered student in their Indian partner institutes was £600 for undergraduate courses and £1000 for postgraduate ones. The sterling component of the fee which had to be paid by students was advertised as separate from the local tuition by the Indian institutes to make it explicit and avoid having to account for fluctuating foreign exchange, which does not favour countries with weak or depreciating currencies. This is also the case at AOD with students paying a registration fee directly to Northumbria University in Sterling, the "large chunk of hard currency" my participant was referring to, in addition to their local tuition.

The tuition fee for undergraduate design courses for the 2019/20 academic year at Northumbria University was £15,000 for international students (Northumbria.ac.uk, 2019). To provide context to that figure, the gross national income per capita in Sri Lanka as of 2018 was approximately £3,139 (data.worldbank.org, 2019). The AOD website noticeably does not provide information on the local tuition or sterling registration fees. When I asked about current tuition costs at AOD over the phone, a member of AOD's senior management said the fee structure is shared individually with prospective applicants by AOD's marketing team.

1.4 Highlighting Concerns with TNE

In general, in all the reports on British TNE explored in the previous section, the notion of providing knowledge and quality assurance is always one-sided. Institutes hosting TNE often undergo multiple forms of quality assurance by local and foreign authorities (British Council and German Academic Exchange Service 2014, p. 33). However, in the relationship between a British academic institute and their TNE partners; it is always the role of the British university to validate their partnering

institutes by benchmarking them to UK standards, which is suggested to be a global mark of excellence regardless of the global ranking of a specific university (British Council, India Design Council, 2016; British Council and Universities UK International Unit, 2016).

Furthermore, a report assessing the impact of British TNE on host countries, institutions, and students reflects a certain arrogance about the quality of education being exported when it states that "the benefits of TNE at the national level outweigh the potential risks or unintended consequences" (British Council and German Academic Exchange Service 2014, p. 64). The statement is based on survey responses of senior leaders in TNE, higher education experts, government agencies, TNE students, graduates, and faculty as well as non-TNE students and faculty (ibid). Even with the diversity of respondents approached, the report admits the surveys had a low response rate (ibid.).

As mentioned, there are close to seven hundred thousand students enrolled in some form of British TNE. The report on the impact of British TNE on host countries is based on the responses of nine hundred and twelve TNE students and eight hundred and ten TNE graduates from ten countries: Botswana, Egypt, Hong Kong, Jordan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Turkey, UAE, and Vietnam (British Council and German Academic Exchange Service 2014). The responses were also "skewed" in favour of students enrolled in branch campuses even though data shows that collaborative forms of British TNE such as validation and franchise partnerships are more common (ibid., p. 13). This raises questions of how representative of the whole sector the survey data is and how appropriate the suggested policies and frameworks based on such quantitative methods of data collection might be.

All the reports and studies reviewed in this section are primarily based on survey responses designed to reach diverse respondents and gather data from a large number of stakeholders based across different parts of the globe. However, each individual study only represents a fraction of the thousands of stakeholders across diverse nations and disciplinary programmes invested in TNE. Considering their shortcomings, one can question the generalised insights these reports offer. For example, suggesting that TNE curriculum is not considered too *Western-centric* by those investing in these services and that it does not negatively impact international students by having English as the main language for instruction (British Council and German Academic Exchange Service 2014).

These insights on curriculum and the use of English are based on a survey asking respondents to order six potential negative attributes of TNE (ibid., p. 20). The list also included the high cost of tuition, limited campus experience, a low commitment of international faculty, and a lack of local recognition of their qualifications in the list of potential negative impacts of investing in TNE (ibid.). The list was based on what were considered to be "generic questions about the positive (benefits) and negative (risks) features of TNE" for the selected target groups (ibid., p. 18). This is problematic as asking a select group of respondents to order a prescribed list of attributes does not offer insights on what a limited campus experience implies or what it means for a curriculum to be Western-centric in a design programme compared to one in

engineering.
Despite the shortcomings identified in the previous literature (Figure 1), they promote the export of TNE services for monetary gains for the UK and developing the UK's global reputation for providing quality higher education. In effect, the reports encourage British universities to capitalise on the global demand for higher education opportunities. On the flip side, the unprecedented growth of transnational education has resulted in so-called "foreign degree mills" selling bogus accreditations and fake degrees to students in host nations (Knight 2013, p. 87). This sets up challenges for those attempting to access higher education through local TNE institutes leading to a need for "consumer protection" for students, employers, and others concerned with qualifications awarded through transnational arrangements (UNESCO/ Council of Europe, 2001).

The motivation of British universities to use TNE to generate income appears obvious, but tracking academic programmes and degrees for national authorities, not to mention maintaining quality standards on a global basis, is extraordinarily difficult. It is especially problematic when many of those seeking to enter the global marketplace and internationalise their institutions are motivated by a desire to earn a profit rather than pursuing an educational mission (Altbach, 2004 and 2015; Altbach and Knight 2007, Knight 2013 and 2015). In a highly competitive global education market, if TNE services are to truly benefit the students and the local economies at large, the quality of educational provision is a critical consideration.

Countries engaging in the export of education services have created accreditation and quality assurance systems and codes to provide "reasonably accurate information" (Altbach 2015, p. 3) based on quantitative data such as the numbers of colleges and universities engaged in partnerships, degrees offered, facilities available, and local governmental policies. For example, the UK has the HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2020) and the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency, 2020). However, the Council for Europe and UNESCO identifies that such codes provide working frameworks from the perspectives of institutes sending their higher education services abroad and must be complemented by those receiving such services or host institutes (2001).

A code of practice or quality assurance system developed from the perspective of those selling their education services is problematic for two reasons. First, in a purely economic sense, such codes will not guarantee market success. Market systems are a powerful engine for economic progress as they make use of opportunities for exchange and specialisation (Sen, 2002). In the context of global knowledge industries, they allow academic institutions with specialised programmes to disseminate and sell their knowledge outside their national borders. However, echoing back to the non-linear projection of economic growth (Marks 2018, p. 42), the same market system can generate different results based on the enabling conditions of a place, such as the availability of human and physical resources (Sen, 2002). Global market relations are influenced by local public policies, education, and credit facilities (ibid.). This means that a code developed for quality assurance in England may not be applicable in a place like Sri Lanka based on the "enabling conditions" of the local context.

As highlighted in the previous section, another concern with generalised policies for

TNE is that "education is not country neutral" (Altbach, 2015, p. 4). Curricula and pedagogy need to consider contextual realities such as culture, learning styles, and type of secondary education (ibid.). A system of educational practice and quality assurance which works in Britain, for example, is unlikely to work in Sri Lanka. Codes for the provision of TNE created from the perspective of institutes exporting educational services will not be attuned to the interests of the "underdog" (Sen, 2002). These concerns come to light in Chapter 4 of this thesis when examining how the design curriculum from Northumbria University translates in Colombo.

Previous studies acknowledge that given the vast and complex nature of TNE, there is no "universal-right way" for any country or institution to approach TNE (British Council and McNamara Economic Research 2013, p. 8). Interested stakeholders need to develop a path suited to them and embrace flexibility to ensure that TNE complements local higher education systems, industries, and governmental policies in host nations and meets mutually agreed upon goals for international collaboration and educational provision (British Council and McNamara Economic Research, 2013; British Council, 2020e). As globalisation continues to shape higher education and TNE continues to grow, we must evaluate transnational institutional arrangements to "overcome errors of omission and those of commission" (Sen, 2002) which lead to unequal access to the opportunities and benefits of globalisation.

1.5 Identifying Knowledge Gaps

The global knowledge industry is a complex space. The list of nations exporting educational services has traditionally included Australia, Canada, the UK, and the USA; but new players in the Asia Pacific region are making headway (Bothwell, 2020a). Vice chancellors in British universities have stated that the UK can no longer depend on historic markets and prestige to ensure student recruitment; they consider the way forward to make revenue from TNE is to work collaboratively with partners to create more value for stakeholders so they actively choose TNE courses (ibid.). These sentiments were echoed at a recent panel organised by the British Council on the future of transnational education (British Council, 2020e). Here, academics with key management positions in institutional internationalisation at various UK universities acknowledged the complexity of such cross-border partnerships and proposed the development for tailor-made responses in TNE partnerships based on needs. The Pro Vice-Chancellor of Manchester Metropolitan University, Prof Jennifer Watling also stated the need for developing mutually supportive relationships to ensure success in such endeavours and establish new models for global education (ibid.).

In addition to the topical nature of the subject, by looking at TNE from a global and local lens, this chapter has demonstrated that this research lies at the intersection of a layered landscape involving globalisation, the internationalisation of higher education, transnational education and design education (Figure 2). Like the irregular movement and growth of amoeba, the landscape of TNE is continuously changing in the global, neo-liberal capitalist context in which it exists.

Communication technologies and the global flow of students, academics, and education services crossing borders enhance globalisation; but globalising forces do not have a standard impact. They can provide opportunities while reinforcing inequalities

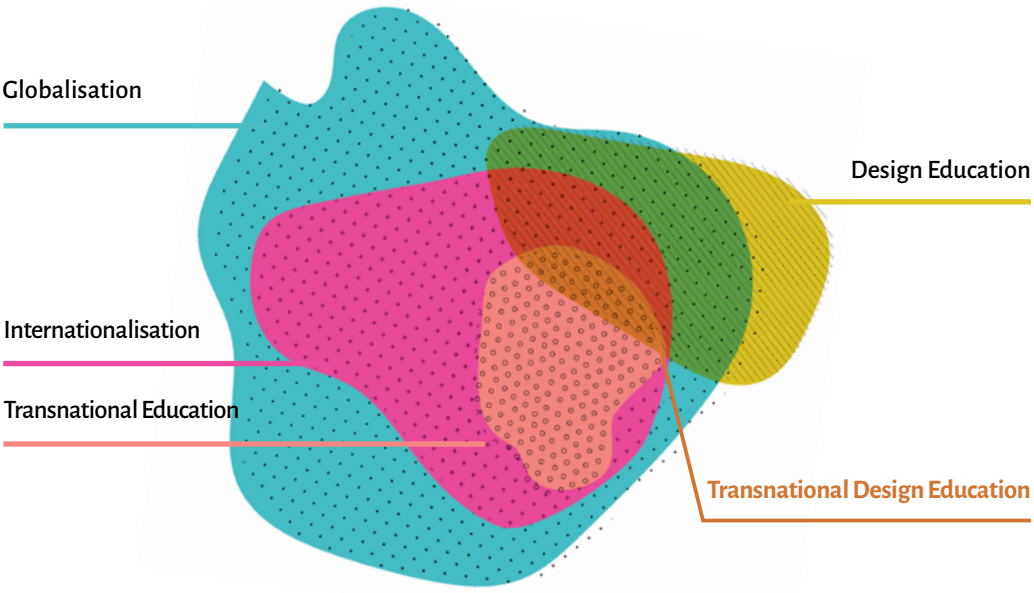


Figure 2 Contextual Landscape of Transnational Design Education.

(Sen, 2002). On the one hand, removing distance-related barriers to tradable services advantages suppliers and users based in remote locations (World Trade Organisation 2013, p. 3). Similarly, the internationalisation of higher education facilitates the dissemination of knowledge and access to quality education for students and scholars in remote parts of the world (Altbach, 2004; Sen, 2002). However, such systems of trade favour rich, economically developed nations as they dominate the production and distribution of knowledge. With communication technologies accelerating the borderless nature of accessing educational services, the most technologically advanced and wealthy education suppliers dominate the global market (Altbach 2015, p. 3). The financially motivated nature of such systems also reinforces inequalities by making such services available only to those who can afford them.

Speaking of inequalities in an academic world without borders, cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai suggests that one of the debates about globalisation is how to protect cultural autonomy and economic competitiveness in some local or regional sphere in this era of openness (Appadurai, 2000). In the case of developing countries, Appadurai (2012) believes that providing opportunities to access higher education can potentially involve sacrificing vernacular knowledge systems so educational institutions can adhere to Western standards to compete in global markets. This concern can be further accelerated by British TNE systems which dictate local institutes to "host" higher education curriculum from Britain "with no curricular input by the host institution" (British Council and McNamara Economic Research, 2013) in countries with social, economic, and cultural contexts different from its own.

Le Ha Phan, a transnational academic, offers a view that complicates and complements Appadurai's concerns. In her book—*Transnational Education Crossing 'Asia' and 'The West'*, she discusses how people in Asia today choose to study in the West, "not necessarily by force, but largely by will and in many cases with an informed and well-articulated agency" (Le-Ha, 2017, p. 5). Based on her experience, she argues that Asia's

economic rise has not made it independent from the West; instead, the cultural forces of globalisation have only intensified the desire for a Western education in countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Dubai (ibid.). She claims that in the context of internationalisation and the commercialisation of higher education, the West and Asia need one another more than ever (ibid.).

Considering the multifaceted nature of this research topic, Zaharlick, an anthropologist interested in educational research, advocates for educators, administrators, and policymakers to adopt a holistic approach to understand the full context of schooling as social, cultural, and economic factors are interrelated and affect education (Zaharlick, 1992). Any intent to improve curriculum, quality assurance, or any other aspect of an education process which does not consider the social, political, economic, and cultural influences is at a disadvantage in achieving long-term success (ibid.). A holistic approach to understanding the value of a British design education in Sri Lanka requires human actions and behaviours to be "viewed in the larger context within which they naturally occur" (Zaharlick 1992, p. 117).

Undertaking a holistic research approach is a clear way forward to offer new knowledge to the field of TNE. As demonstrated in the previous sections, most research on TNE offers quantitative data from surveys which are designed by institutions invested in exporting the UK's educational services. The surveys engage respondents in closed rather than open ended questions and the resulting data is further supported by relevant secondary literature and qualitative methods such as interviews or case studies. The benefit of using surveys and comparative indexes on national legislation as methods for data collection lies in accessing diverse and geographically distributed stakeholders involved in TNE. However, participant responses are limited by the questionnaires and frameworks of multiple-choice answers; there is no room for recording organic responses, personal reflection, or critique. In research carried out by the British Council and HEA, the secondary literature, such as case studies, were interpreted to benefit the UK's agenda to expand its global reach through TNE partnerships, with limited to no perspectives or opposing views from practitioners or policymakers in host nations.

To plan for a holistic approach, I shall state the objectives for this research based on the knowledge gaps identified upon reviewing the select literature on TNE by invested national stakeholders in the UK and Sri Lanka. First, large scale institutional stakeholders invested in British TNE have shown limited interest in developing a more inclusive process for defining structures and policies which includes collaborators from host nations and institutes as epistemic partners rather than respondents for data collection. Such reports tend to privilege a global order in favour of exporting nations while ignoring the hierarchical power relations perpetuated to sustain their market dominance. Reports by the British Council on the scope for design education in India also promote a universal culture for the discipline favouring Eurocentric design while classifying India's design culture as a "craft tradition" (British Council and India Design Council 2016, p. 9).

Second, most literature on TNE dismisses the notion of knowledge exchange between sending and host institutes. Instead, they focus on knowledge transfers from

Britain to partner institutions in their respective nations. Additionally, considering the ambiguity on how knowledge flows in independent, collaborative, or flexible academic partnerships are defined (section 1.3.1), the first objective of this research is to understand the flow of knowledge in the form of a design curriculum from England to Sri Lanka from the perspective of stakeholders involved in the everyday teaching and learning of TNE at a franchise institute. This leads to the secondary research question— *how does knowledge really flow in TNE systems?*

In relation to the flow of knowledge, Altbach argues that curriculum and other qualitative aspects of education have often been neglected in developing countries because efforts have been concentrated on quantitative expansion (1971, 2004, 2015). Frameworks for the collaborative provision of TNE developed in the UK and Germany recognise the need for flexibility "to reflect the realities faced by the more than 120 countries involved in TNE", they stress the importance of data collection rather than institutional relationships and how TNE should be facilitated on the ground (British Council and German Academic Exchange Service 2017, p. 55). Methods that can enable long term and more mutually beneficial TNE partnerships between the UK and its partner nations are unclear, which is a clear gap in the existing research. Based on this knowledge gap, the second objective of this research is to understand the qualitative aspects of facilitating a design curriculum at a TNE host institute and answer the research question—*how do TNE systems acknowledge contextual specificities?*

Finally, to circle back to the multifaceted nature of the subject, the international dimension of higher education, or in the case of this research, the transnational dimension of design education, has impacts on areas outside of education such as immigration, trade, economic development, and culture (Knight, 2004). The topics discussed in this chapter raise the question of how TNE partnerships can collaborate to ensure that higher education internationalisation contributes to such various fields and more importantly, do so in a way that benefits all stakeholders, particularly the students who are the consumers of such educational services. To explore the broader impact of TNE outside academia through the lens of professional design practice in Sri Lanka, this research will explore the question— *how does a TNE experience in design education provide access to communities of design practice?*

To conclude, Knight (2004) has described the study of higher education internationalisation using keywords such as complex, multifaceted, diverse, controversial, and challenging. This suggests that such globalised educational endeavours are still evolving and can change and develop. As the primary investigator, I intend to make an original contribution to the field of transnational design education by demonstrating an in-depth, critical understanding of teaching and learning in a TNE setting by studying the working relationship of the franchise partnerships between the Academy of Design and Northumbria University. By sharing the voices of multiple stakeholders involved in one example of such complex partnerships, this research reverses the gaze on TNE research by amplifying the perspective of institutes hosting foreign education and stakeholders facilitating and learning within their designed structures. In this way, this project will contribute towards providing a more theoretically informed, holistic picture of the current landscape of transnational design education partnerships and extend current research.

Ch. 2 An Imbalance of Knowledge and Power

Certain words in Sinhala, one of the national languages of Sri Lanka, were borrowed from the Dutch when they colonised the country in the seventeenth century. Words like balkaniyē (balcony) and kōppaya (cup) initially borrowed from the Dutch words balkon and kop have lingered on in everyday spoken Sinhala. In 2015, in my role as the Assistant Head of the graphic design department at AOD, I conceptualised an exhibition in collaboration with the Embassy of the Netherlands in Sri Lanka and Maldives titled Borrowed Words in recognition of the shared history between the two nations and in graphic celebration of the eclectic cultural heritage of the island. The exhibition was held at a site called the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon or DBU as it is known locally. A colonial building which hosts a private social club, the DBU was founded in 1908 to "promote the moral, intellectual, and social well-being of the Dutch descendants in Ceylon" (The Dutch Burgher Union, 2021).

Places like the DBU are clear reminders of Sri Lanka's colonial heritage, which are visible in many aspects of social life, which in turn affects local knowledge and education systems. Tikly and Bond (2013, p. 424) suggest considering postcolonialism as "a general process of disengagement of formerly colonised countries from European colonialism and classical imperialism and their reinsertion into the flows and networks that characterise contemporary globalisation". This research is scrutinising a transnational franchise arrangement between Northumbria University and AOD. With Sri Lanka being a former colony of Britain, the working relationship between AOD and Northumbria University also functions in a postcolonial context.

Considering the postcolonial context of the study, this chapter critically evaluates the contextual landscape of transnational education introduced in Chapter 1 by examining the power structures of knowledge; mainly, how knowledge is controlled by dominant powers (Said, 2003). The key authors cited in this chapter contribute to research at the intersection of globalisation, education, and postcolonial discourse (Ashcroft et al. 1998; Loomba, 2015; Rizvi et al., 2006; Said, 2003; Tikly, 1999, 2001). By exploring literature on postcolonialism and its effects on education, this thesis demonstrate the value of using postcolonial discourse and its associated terms and metaphors as a theoretical lens to understand the imbalance in the flows of knowledge, capital, and power in design education and TNE systems.

2.1 Colonialism, Imperialism, and the Post-Colonial State

Colonisation, as defined by Loomba (2015, p. 20) is the "conquest and control of other people's land and goods" and has been a common feature of human history. Colonialism did more than extract the wealth from a conquered country, "it restructured the economies of the latter" (Loomba 2015, p. 21), drawing nation-states into complex relationships incorporating flows in human and natural resources between colonised and colonial countries. European colonialism involved a variety of techniques for domination, all of them resulting in imbalances of social, cultural, and economic capital which enabled the growth of capitalism in Europe (ibid.).

Sri Lanka has a long history of being colonised: the Portuguese occupied the island's coasts in the year 1505, followed by the Dutch in 1630, and the British taking power over the country in 1815 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Ceylon, as it was known

under British rule, gained independence in 1948 and officially became known as the Republic of Sri Lanka in 1972 (ibid.). Although it is now a postcolonial state, being colonised for over four hundred years has had significant effects on Sri Lanka. During a discussion on the effects of colonialism on education in Sri Lanka with a group of AOD alumni, the consensus was that it was difficult to imagine what the country would have been like if it had not been colonised,

> Even though we are independent, there is always the structure of things that were introduced by the British. We still go about with those structures; our parliamentary systems and the general systems in the country look up to it… Where would we be, right? (Senuri, Focus group, March 9, 2019)

A postcolonial state is a term used by historians, economists, and political theorists to imply a post-independence condition; marking the separation of the colonised from an imperial power (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 193). The definition suggests a demise of colonialism, a linear timeline with a before and after, and does not do justice to the complexities of postcolonialism or the process of contestation and disengagement from the legacy of colonialism (Loomba, 2015). To accommodate the complexities of a postcolonial state, this project adopts Tikly's definition of postcolonialism as "a general condition or shift in the cultural, political, and economic arrangements that arise from the experiences of European colonialism in both formerly colonised and colonising countries" (1999, p.605).

Postcolonial analyses have traditionally paid systematic attention to the historical role of European colonialism in managing and directing the global flow of persons, commodities, and ideas (Loomba et al. 2005, p. 16). Globalisation is a significant aspect of postcolonial studies as globalising processes cannot be separated from the power structures established by European imperialism (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 113). As illustrated in Chapter 1, the internationalisation of education as a result of globalisation, trade in services, and growth of communication technologies involves a dynamic of dominance and control which favours academic institutes in wealthy nations. Theorists of postcolonialism argue that such power and influence operate under an established structure which emerged in favour of the colonisers several hundred years ago (Loomba, 2015; Rizvi et al., 2006; Tikly 1999). A homogeneous global culture and economy did not "spontaneously erupt" but has a history embedded in the history of imperialism and favours centres of capitalist power, perpetuating the imperial rhetoric (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 111).

Loomba describes imperialism as "capitalist colonialism" (2015, p. 26) where direct colonial rule is unnecessary since existing economic and social relations of dependency and control ensure captive labour and markets for European goods and industry. Imperialism, in this sense, can be understood as an economic system of controlling markets in ways that ensure that they are unaffected by political change, such as independence from a colonial power (ibid.). Chapter 1, for example, introduced the unequal, one-way flows of knowledge in TNE systems to maintain market dominance for universities exporting their educational services abroad, echoing Loomba's description of imperialism. Since nations and institutes hosting TNE services are dependent on the cultural capital of sending institutes, they offer

a captive market for their services. Historically unequal relations of colonial rule are seen in contemporary imbalances between wealthy and 'developing' nations and cannot be ignored even though the new global order does not depend upon a direct rule (Loomba, 2015).

While imperialism today does not require direct rule, *neo-colonialism* is the term used to describe the new form of colonialism experienced in former colonies by their former colonisers or new superpowers. For instance, international monetary bodies such as the World Trade Organisation imposing their neoliberal ideals on nation-states (Ashcroft et al., 1998). This type of indirect control or imperialism experienced in former colonies is "more insidious and more difficult to detect and resist than older overt colonialism" (ibid., p. 163).

As discussed in Chapter 1, globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education looks beyond the nation; postcolonial discourse can complement the study of globalised education systems by offering perspectives on the relation between national and transnational forms of economy, society, and culture (Loomba et al. 2005, p. 21). According to Loomba (2015, p. 39), postcolonial studies can be placed under two broad overlapping contexts, the first is decolonisation and the second is the revolution in thinking about similar issues within Western intellectual traditions. Decolonisation relates to the people who fought against colonial rule and their successors who engage with its continuing legacy by revising dominant definitions of race, culture, and language. Decolonisation, as an epistemic revolution within Western thinking, is concerned with how language articulates experience, how ideologies work, how human subjectivities are formed, and what we might mean by culture.

In the second context of postcolonial studies, Loomba (2015) describes how postcolonial movements and individuals often drew upon Western ideas and vocabularies to challenge colonial rule. They hybridised what they borrowed by juxtaposing it with indigenous ideas, reading it through their own interpretive lens to assert cultural differences (ibid.). This project identifies with this second context of postcolonialism, that is, drawing upon Western ideas and vocabularies to challenge a hierarchical system of cross border education and identifies methods of hybridisation that exist in the everyday practice of TNE to assert cultural differences.

2.2 Sri Lanka: A Postcolonial State

Tikly (1999) claims that colonialism is not over, but its modalities and effects have been transformed through globalisation. Acknowledging Sri Lanka as a former colony of Britain helps reveal how postcolonialism "makes visible the history and legacy of European colonialism," helping us understand how former colonial empires continue to shape most contemporary political, economic, and cultural discourses (Rizvi et al. 2006, p. 250). Evidence of Sri Lanka's varied colonial past can be seen across the country in many forms: colonial architecture such as the DBU; the parliamentary system as mentioned by Senuri; the legal system has a basis in English common law and Roman-Dutch civil law; and the cultural influence of sports such as cricket and rugby, for example. The "historical experience of European, and especially British, colonialism" is central to the "economic, political,

and cultural construction" of modern Sri Lanka (Perera 1998, p. 185).

Unlike its neighbour India, there was never any mass agitation against British rule in Sri Lanka. The country gained independence in 1948, mainly because of the region's general decolonisation that stemmed from the nationalist struggle in India (Rogers et al., 1998). Like several former British colonies, the nation still maintains voluntary ties to the United Kingdom post-independence as a member of the Commonwealth (The Commonwealth, 2020). However, there has also been a rise in Sri Lankan nationalism and contestation of its colonial history evidenced, for instance, in various linguistic policies in post-independence Sri Lanka (Coperehewa, 2011; Herath, 2015).

In 1956, the government passed the Sinhala Only Bill, making Sinhalese the official language of the country in an effort to undo the effects of the Colebrook-Cameron reforms of 1831, which had made English the explicit language of governance and encouraged the use of the language in administration, education, and law (Casinader, Wijeyaratne and Godden, 2018). The British had categorised Sri Lanka into four distinct groups: the Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamils, Muslims, and Indian Tamils (Rogers et al., 1998). The Sinhalese, defined by their use of the Sinhala language, were and continue to be the dominant group on the island as they make up the ethnic majority. In contrast, the three minority groups spoke Tamil (ibid.). Across the nine geographic provinces on the island, the Sinhalese claim a majority in all but the Northern and Eastern provinces. The social identities of the Sinhalese and Tamil were partially correlated through religious beliefs. While most Sinhalese are Buddhists and most Tamil-speakers are Hindu or Muslim: both linguistic groups have significant Christian minorities (ibid.).

The Sinhala Only Bill and the majority Sinhalese government's attempt at decolonisation was vehemently opposed by the Tamil speaking minority of Sri Lanka (Herath, 2015), illustrating the complexity of postcolonial states in establishing a unifying culture while addressing cultural diversity and divisions created by former colonial powers. The bill can also be viewed in terms of the divisive after-effects of British colonialism, where plural political and cultural existence was seen as problematic. The Sinhala Only Bill adopted the spirit of the Colebrook-Cameron reforms by centralising the State and enabling the majority Sinhalese Buddhist community to fashion a constitutional order that systematically ostracised minority communities on the island (Casinader, Wijeyaratne and Godden, 2018).

From 1956, public discourse increasingly equated Sinhala identity with national identity, accentuating political alienation and militancy amongst Tamil minority groups (Rogers et al., 1998). The Sinhalese-Tamil political struggle led to widespread ethnic violence in 1983 when the deaths of 13 soldiers at the hands of Tamil militants were followed by widespread attacks against Tamil citizens, businesses, and property in the predominantly Sinhalese parts of the country (ibid.). The ethnic and political struggles led to a violent civil war, lasting three decades.

Today, the Sri Lankan government recognises Sinhalese and Tamil as national languages and uses English as an official language (Herath, 2015) and the trilingual street signage seen across the country suggests a lingual harmony. However,

ethnic, and linguistic conflicts between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil speaking minorities around the preservation and recognition of vernacular culture of minorities continues to affect Sri Lanka today (de Silva, Haniffa and Bastin, 2019). Although the war ended in 2009, social and political tensions between Sri Lanka's ethnic groups still pose challenges to a peaceful coexistence post-war (Kijewski and Rapp, 2019).

A more recent example of a postcolonial endeavour was the Sri Lankan government's decision to change the names of all state institutions still bearing the nation's former colonial name, Ceylon (Haviland, 2011). Despite the government's political statement, the national board for electricity (Ceylon Electricity Board, 2020) continues to use the former colonial name as does Sri Lanka's best-known export, tea, which continues to be branded as Ceylon Tea (Ceylon Tea, 2020). While speaking with a former colleague at AOD, she shared the opinion that most political endeavours to decolonise are nothing more than bluster. Most people in the country still aspire to the West and regard their former colonisers in reverence,

> Our politicians tried to promote free education, and that everyone should study in Sinhala, and they tried to make Sinhalese the national language in 1956. But none of those politicians sent their children to the local universities or the local schools. So, whatever said and done, politicians always send their children to Oxford or Harvard, the best universities in the West (Amanda, Interview, February 18, 2019).

Amanda's statement and the reaction to the Sinhala Only bill is illustrative of two things, the ambivalence felt towards Britain by some Sri Lankans and the reality of anti-colonial movements not representing the interests of all the people of a postcolonial country (Loomba 2015, p.32). The challenge for most contemporary postcolonial states is to "construct an effective unity whilst avoiding the oppression of minority groups whose practices clash with those of the dominant national mythology" (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 195).

The history of Sri Lanka is important as it shapes the experience of stakeholders in AOD in terms of language, culture, education, and agency. It is impossible to understand globalised education systems, such as TNE partnerships, without recognising the role of colonial and postcolonial education systems in the spread of Western cultural forms (Tikly, 1999). Returning to the aforementioned discussion on the postcolonial state of Sri Lanka with AOD alumni, I had asked the group if the general perception of AOD, an institute with a British partner, would be different if their affiliation was with a different nation. The response was that a British education and Britain more so than any other country, was familiar, "let's say an Italian (school) even for them to establish themselves, I think might be a lot tougher" (Kalpani, Focus group, March 9, 2019). This awareness of Sri Lanka's postcolonial context will contribute to meaningful and appropriate interpretations of narratives in chapters still to come as well as an understanding of the relationship between institutional structures, processes, and ruling relations in the AOD-Northumbria franchise partnership offering British design education in Colombo.

2.3 Postcolonial Discourse: Key Vocabulary and Metaphors of Space and Time

Throughout this thesis, several key terms and metaphors borrowed from postcolonial discourse help shape the research design, analysis, and discussions. To begin with, the term *discourse* in the critical lens of postcolonial discourse is used to mean a "system of statements within which the world can be known," as it is through unspoken rules of discourse, the world is brought into being (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 70). Discourse joins power and knowledge since those who have power control knowledge and the way it is known; colonisers, for example, maintained power over the colonised through Eurocentric discourse which involved certain assumptions, prejudices, and exclusions (ibid.). This study uses vocabulary borrowed from postcolonial discourse to situate the empirical study in the legacy of colonial history and challenge the assumptions of educational systems evolved from neo-liberal capitalism.

For instance, the terms *agency*, *ambivalence*, and *hegemony* help describe the postcolonial state of stakeholders at AOD. Individual and collective agency in transnational design education is a key theme of this project. In general, *agency* refers to the ability to act or perform an action; in particular, the term refers to whether individuals can freely and autonomously initiate action (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 8). In the context of postcolonial theory, agency "refers to the ability of postcolonial subjects to initiate action in engaging or resisting imperial power" (ibid.). From an educational science perspective, agency in the workplace is defined as the autonomy "exercised when professional subjects and or communities influence, make choices and take stances on their work and professional identities" (Eteläpelto et al. 2013, p. 61).

This thesis explores how individual agency of stakeholders invested in the AOD-Northumbria partnership is enmeshed in the specifics of being situated in an educational space within a postcolonial context. For instance, Chapters 4 and 5 explore the flow of knowledge in the partnership between AOD and Northumbria University and includes discussions on the agency of stakeholders at TNE host institutes to facilitate and adapt a British design curriculum for a South Asian student body which often involves resistance to institutional structures. Chapter 6 discusses the agency developed by AOD graduates as a by-product of their British design education to navigate and engage with their local industry, which requires agency to establish their professional identities.

The term *ambivalence* suggests a state of mixed feelings about something or someone and was adapted into colonial discourse by critical theorist Bhabha (1984) to describe the complex relationship between colonisers and the colonised characterised as a mix of attraction and repulsion (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p.12). In the words of Bhabha, colonisers want the colonised to be "almost the same, but not white" (1984, p. 130). From the perspective of the coloniser, colonial discourse wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce their "assumptions, habits, and values– that is, 'mimic' the coloniser" (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 13). The relation between colonisers and the colonised is ambivalent because the colonised subject is never wholly opposed to the coloniser; complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject. The effect of ambivalence (simultaneous attraction and repulsion) on colonised subjects disturbs the authority of colonial discourse (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Bhabha 1984).

The lines of inquiry in the empirical research design, detailed in Chapter 3, use the notion of ambivalence to question the nature of the relationship between AOD and Northumbria University and the effects of a British design curriculum on the design identity of South Asian students based in Sri Lanka. For example, to gather perspectives on the lingering effects of colonialism in Sri Lanka and the local perception of the West, all research participants from Sri Lanka and Newcastle were asked the following questions– how do you think being a former British colony has shaped Sri Lanka's perception of Western education? How would you describe the nature of the AOD and NU relationship? How does Northumbria University influence AOD's value as a design school?

For the same line of inquiry, the concept of *hegemony* was vital in understanding the capacity to influence education systems and policies by dominant powers and discourses. Hegemony, today, is understood to mean "domination by consent" (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 116). In its essence, hegemony is "the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all" (ibid.) or power achieved through "a combination of coercion and consent" (Loomba 105, p. 48). The ruling classes dominate the masses not by force or even active persuasion, but by holding power over critical national sectors such as the economy, education, and media. By having control of economic, cultural, and social forces, the interests of the ruling class are presented as a common interest and thus become uncontested (Ashcroft et al. 1998).

In this project, hegemony helps establish two issues: first, Section 2.5 in this chapter discusses how Eurocentric values, assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes in design are considered to be universal. Second, using the notion of hegemony, Chapter 6 illustrates how graduates of a British design degree practising outside Britain incorporate or challenge notions of professional mobility, opportunity, and community in the dominant discourses of design practice.

The process of globalisation and notions of a borderless planet evokes images of frictionless flow; a spreading or moving around the entire world (Marks 2018, p. 59). Globalisation studies, postcolonial discourse, as well as modern international relations, use geographic metaphors to describe the movement of people, goods, and even economic, social, and cultural power between nations. Although transnational networks accelerated by communication technologies challenge the notion of capital, people, and ideas flowing in a colonial path from centre to periphery or North to South (Loomba 2015; Rizvi et al., 2006), transnational academics referenced in the previous chapter allude to metaphors such as *core-periphery*, *North-South*, and *developed* and *developing nations* to describe the flow of knowledge in exchange for capital (Altbach and Knight, 2007; Knight, 2002; Sen, 2002).

As articulated by Marks (2018, p. 4), metaphors provide "the narrative structure through which facts are sorted into categories, assumptions are made, hypotheses are derived, and theories are formulated". Although Marks admits that metaphors can be problematic for their vagueness and ambiguity, they are a fundamental element in human reasoning, knowledge acquisition, and persuasion by providing a frame of reference (ibid.). In international relations, geographic metaphors "apply common spatial imagery to the study of relations among international actors of

unequal wealth" (Marks 2018, p. 44). As discussed previously (Chapter 1, section 1.2), in the case of TNE, trade-based partnerships between host and sending institutes involve such actors of unequal wealth with wealthy nations such as the UK exporting their curriculum to, in this case, the developing nation, Sri Lanka. The concept of a developed and developing nation, as stated previously implies value based on economic productivity and technological sophistication (Marks 2018, p. 41), which suggests a binary opposition to create and maintain hierarchies among nations based on wealth and development (Marks 2018, p. 39).

On the basis of "basic economic country conditions," the United Nations classifies the United Kingdom as a developed economy and Sri Lanka as a developing one (UN/DESA 2014, p. 145). This notion of development is based on "a Western, linear view of time, development, and progress" (Tikly and Bond 2013, p. 425), making it a temporal metaphor. Categorising spaces as developed or underdeveloped is a form of "elimination design" (Escobar 2018, p. 6) where the universalising assumptions for progress exclude local contexts and realities to legitimise the logic of productivity where linear economic growth becomes the sole criterion through which development and progress are evaluated (Tikly and Bond 2013).

In this research, geographic or spatial metaphors help articulate the links between colonialism and the neo-colonial structure of global inequity at large and in the field of globally networked systems of design education. For instance, the idea of there being a global geographic centre and margin or periphery is one of the most contentious ideas in postcolonial discourse, yet it remains an essential concept in representing relationships between people and power because of the colonial period (Ashcroft et al., 1998). Europe, as the imperial power, was considered the centre with everything outside the centre classified at the margin or periphery of culture, power, and civilisation (ibid). The imperial mission of nations such as Britain was to bring the margins under the influence of the "enlightened centre" (ibid., p. 36). The terms are contentious as any attempt to define a model of centre and margin perpetuates overly simplistic binaries.

The obvious problem of the "core" and "periphery" metaphor and its variation of a centre and margins is that the world's geography does not indicate a definable centre. Land, sea, and the distribution of human populations do not form in such a way that economic and political communities form in concentric circles (Marks 2018, p. 45). These terms suggest that economic activity and wealth are concentrated within certain communities that exert economic and political control over global economic interactions.

Interactions among international actors of unequal wealth are also discussed metaphorically as "North-South" relations. This metaphor refers to the fact that most of the global economic activity and financial wealth is located above the equator, while lesser amounts of economic resources are allocated to regions further south (Marks 2018, p. 46). As with the "core-periphery" metaphor, the "North-South" imagery simplifies the complexity of the global distribution of wealth as a binary opposition between two distinct geographic poles (ibid.). Additionally, geographic metaphors dismiss notions of South-South relationships which were brought up by research

participants in the field. When speaking about the effects of globalisation on student tastes and aspirations, a member of AOD's academic management mentioned that students found inspiration from the East and West,

> I've learned a lot about Korean soap operas from students at AOD. They do it both ways, they are in on the mix between Europe and China, and they go back and forth. So, Far Eastern globalisation as well. I think that they are becoming this melting pot, and I think that's great and something that we need to be a part of and take control of and own (Cole, Interview, February 14, 2019).

Marks admits that although world-systems theorists are the first to point out that while spatial metaphors like "core" and "periphery" refer to instances of economic activity, when researchers set out to study the "core", they focus on certain parts of the world, for example, Europe, North America, or Japan (2018, p. 45). These nations contain high concentrations of wealth but also pockets of poverty. Likewise, when scholars research the "periphery" they tend to focus on other parts of the world, for example, nations in Africa, South America, and parts of Asia that contain communities of little wealth but also centres of intense economic activity. Thus, "core" and "periphery" tend to be associated with distinct geographic regions even though they are meant to refer to institutions and people involved in economic activity and the concentration of wealth (ibid.). These metaphors are particularly difficult to avoid when examining the power structures of knowledge in a partnership between two academic institutes situated in nations which are at the opposing ends of such binaries and have a shared colonial history.

2.4 Power Structures of Knowledge

Analysing hegemonic systems of education, culture, and language are crucial to understanding current structures of power. Colonial attempts to classify, record, represent, and educate non-European societies helped colonisers comprehend worlds they did not understand and make them manageable for "imperial consumption and exploitation" (Loomba 2015, p. 110). The book *Orientalism*, by Edward Said (2003), uses the concept of discourse to "re-order the study of colonialism" (ibid., p. 43). First published in 1978, Said's path-breaking book shows the connection between power and knowledge, particularly how dominant powers control knowledge.

Orientalism illustrates how nations in the West have historically othered and stereotyped countries in the East (or the Orient) as racially inferior through the medium of literature, epistemology, and colonialism (Said, 2003). Said claims that these perceptions or "attitudes of cultural hostility" (ibid., p. 290) remain and can be seen in power relations between nations and cultures in the modern global hierarchy. Said's work redefines imperialism in terms of cultural power; culture operates within civil society and includes voluntary affiliations like schools and families where the influence of ideas and institutions is based on consent (Said, 2003) which is akin to hegemony. As defined previously (Section 2.3), hegemonic cultural forms or ideologies are achieved not necessarily by direct manipulation or indoctrination but by playing upon the common sense of people. Loomba (2015) claims ideology to be crucial in creating consent; it is the medium through which ideas are transmitted and held to be true.

Furthermore, hegemony is central to the process of domination; postcolonial contentions surrounding the relationship between knowledge and power are "directly linked to education as academic institutes inculcate people into hegemonic systems of reasoning but are also sites to resist or question dominant discourse" (Rizvi et al. 2006, p.257). Education has a systematically ambivalent relation to postcolonialism (ibid.). On the one hand, education systems and curricula can be objects of postcolonial critique regarding their complicity with Eurocentric discourses and practices. At the same time, "it is only through education that it is possible to reveal and resist colonialism's continuing hold on our imagination" (ibid.).

For example, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire and Ramos, 2017), Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire brings together Marxist ideologies and anti-colonial discourses to offer critical pedagogy that can awaken a critical consciousness in people oppressed by dominant structures of power and knowledge so they can regain their humanity through a struggle for liberation. According to Freire's Marxist perspective, in capitalist contexts where a dominant class upholds asymmetrical relations of power through social and material domination, educational systems can become instruments of dehumanisation by systematically thwarting the empowerment and self-determination of students from the oppressed classes. Freire contextualises the need for a liberatory and humanist pedagogy and education system that engages with the historical and social conditions of the oppressed. Such pedagogy has two stages: first, the oppressed must "unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation" (ibid., p. 28). In the second stage, when the reality of oppression have been transformed and the oppressed are liberated, they can commit themselves to "the expulsion of the myths created and developed in the old order" (ibid., p. 29).

Freire's work is seminal to critical pedagogy and development studies. His concepts of *praxis* and *conscientisation* discuss the need for developing critical awareness of one's social reality through reflective action to move past the coloniser-colonised or oppressor-oppressed dynamic to offer a view of education as the *practice of freedom* (Freire and Ramos, 2017). However, this thesis does not adopt Friere's approach to the empirical study of transnational design education as the participants of this study (detailed in Chapter 3, Section 3.5) cannot be considered part of an oppressed class fighting for their liberation. As the findings chapters reveal, students financially investing in this particular transnational franchise belong to the social class of the wealthy postcolonial elite (Section 4.1). The participants' narratives also reveal examples of developing a *dialogical praxis* (Freire and Ramos, 2017), or a reflective creative practice, as a byproduct of their design education (Chapter 6). Therefore, this thesis analyses hegemonic systems of higher education through postcolonial critique, which can be defined as "a critique of modernity from the Global South" (Grosfoguel 2011, p. 3).

Scholars such as Ramón Grosfoguel, known for his work on the decolonisation of knowledge and power, describes modern/colonial knowledge structures to be the product of a series of *epistemicides*, or the destruction of knowledge that is tied to the destruction of a people (Grosfoguel, 2002; 2015). An example of epistemicide is the Catholic conquest of Al-Andalus and the resulting destruction of Islamic and Judaic spirituality and knowledge through the genocide of Muslims and Jews in Southern Spain in the late fifteenth century (ibid.). This is only one of the epistemicides that

created racial and patriarchal power, resulting in the epistemic privilege for Western knowledge and the inferiority of the rest (Grosfoguel, 2015). Based on the narrative of epitismicide, knowledge produced in Westernised universities is simultaneously epistemically racist, sexist, and based on the knowledge produced by a few men from five countries in Western Europe and North America: Italy, France, England, Germany and the United States (Grosfoguel, 2002; 2015). This provincialism assumes universalism where one, or a select few, defines for the rest what is valid knowledge (ibid.).

On the topic of Eurocentrism, racism, and knowledge, Grosfoguel (2015) argues that decolonising the structures of knowledge in Westernised universities will require a break with universalism to include epistemic diversity to the canon of thought. This requires creating an approach towards knowledge where the many define for the many (a pluriverse) instead of one for the rest (a universe). This decolonial project of producing pluriverses of meaning is the task of Transmodernity, defined as, "the recognition of epistemic diversity without epistemic relativism" (Grosfoguel 2015, p. 42). Unlike the liberal multiculturalist celebration of global epistemic diversity, which leaves power structures intact, Transmodernity acknowledges the need for a shared universal project against capitalism, patriarchy, imperialism, and coloniality. The common goal being to reject universal solutions and accept that different cultures and epistemic traditions may have different responses and solutions to similar problems. These discussions show that the growth of modern Western knowledge systems and the histories of most disciplines are shaped by colonial discourses, including the discipline of design.

2.5 Design History, Culture, and Practice

Design as a discipline is generally understood to have evolved from a premise of mass manufacturing and development based on industrial output and technological sophistication. In an article discussing the potential possibilities and problems of globalising design history, Huppatz claims that colonial structures of knowledge are a price paid by the rest of the world for the rise of the West (2015, p. 186). His claim ties in with the previous discussion of development involving *elimination design* (Section 2.3); in order for Western design knowledge to be considered universal, the rest of the world must pay the price of other forms of knowledge being eliminated or forced to the peripheries. The standard narrative of design history begins in the nineteenth century with the Industrial Revolution in Britain and ends in the present day (ibid., p. 188). As it stands today, the historical development of modern industrial design places Britain as its origin and then paints it as a backdrop for contemporary design culture which is promoted as having universal principles and is carried as an international movement to the rest of the world (Munch 2019, p. 172).

Huppatz (2015, p. 190) suggests that the colonial model of movement or flow from a declared centre towards peripheries is a useful strategy when analysing relationships in the history of design. He provides the example of The Great Exhibition of London in 1851, an international event dedicated to displaying the material progress of industrialisation which represented a new world order of free trade beyond national boundaries. The exhibition located professional designers and industrial manufacturing in Britain while the colonies provided raw materials and export markets (Huppatz 2015, p. 191). These origins of design as a discipline echo Loomba's description of imperialism as a form of capitalist colonialism (2015, p. 26) with Britain ensuring financial and technological

hegemony by having a captive market for selling its manufactured products in its colonies which were also a cheap source of raw materials.

Academics like Escobar have also proposed design to be a fundamentally Eurocentric discipline with colonial roots involving systems designed to serve capitalist ends and destroy communal forms of existence (Escobar, 2018). In his book, *Designs for the Pluriverse*, he argues that notions of universalism or "one world" are imperialistic because they allow the West to justify itself "the right to be 'the world,' and to subject all other worlds to its rules," (Escobar 2018, p. 86). Universalism has diminished other worlds or ways of being to secondary status or nonexistence, often figuratively and materially. Expanding the knowledge base of design includes correcting the lopsided Western or Eurocentric representation of design history which diminishes others by exploring "global design history" as an inclusive methodology to introduce "the multi-sited and various nature of design practices" (Adamson et al. 2011, p. 3).

Design historian Victor Margolin (2005) has previously addressed how the community of design historians is only gradually confronting how a more globally inclusive world history of design might be written. In line with the previous arguments, he agrees that the limited definition of design has confined many design scholars to studying the industrialised regions of the world (ibid.). Rather than considering design to be a product of industrialisation, we need to think more broadly about the conception and planning of material and visual culture. Margolin states, "people of all ethnic backgrounds have been active designers within their own communities, even if they have worked mainly outside the orbit of advanced industrialisation" (ibid., p. 241); a more inclusive history of design must also reveal how design has been used to promote positive social values as well as reinforce racial stereotypes. His recent volumes titled the World History of Design (Margolin, 2015) offer a more inclusive account of global design history by providing a narrative that includes political, economic, and social factors rather than treating design as a chronology of objects or styles distributed across a linear timeline and geography.

2.5.1 Evolving Design Culture

To challenge the hegemonic, Eurocentric ways of seeing, knowing, and designing, there is a growing movement to critically reflect on the discipline and decolonise design (Decolonising Design, 2017; Khandwala, 2019; Schultz et al., 2018; Tunstall, 2017). Decolonising design is a reformist project to challenge and destabilise colonial relations of power and "the dominant forms, conventions, grammars, and language through which knowledge about design is expressed and enacted in ongoing research and design work" (Schultz et al. 2018, p.3). The process of decolonisation, in the discipline of design and in postcolonial states is a "complex and continuing process" that is not automatically achieved at the moment of independence and made harder with continuing control of neo-colonialism in the form of global institutions, whether monetary, educational, or cultural (Ashcroft et al., 1998, p. 66).

An example of countering Eurocentric views of design, academics such as Jani (2011) are working towards a more expansive narrative of the discipline. Her publication on diversity in design provides resources from locations and cultures usually considered to be on the periphery of design discourse; namely India, China, Turkey, Nigeria, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt (ibid.). Her objective is to help educators

teach design from an "inclusive perspective that acknowledges the contributions of all world cultures" to prepare future designers to meet the ever-increasing "global needs" of today (Jani 2011, Preface). An example of a global need, in the context of design practice, is a desire for multilingual designers with diverse cultural experiences to answer to the needs of their multilingual, culturally diverse clients (ibid., Introduction). A Eurocentric education, in this new world reality of interconnectedness, would limit a student's ability to meet the challenges of a global market. Therefore, design education, both in curricula as well as research and practical projects, must focus on design applications for diverse cultures and human systems (Jani, 2011).

Jani (2011) defines culture as a distinctive way of life that represents the values, customs, and norms of a group of people who pass these traditional values from one generation to the next. This learned way of life is reflected in social, political, educational, and economic institutions; values and belief systems; and languages and artefacts. Unlike design history, design culture focuses on design's contemporary manifestations and maintains an "emphasis on the deep understanding of design objects and their interrelations with the multiple actors engaged in their shaping, functioning, and reproduction" (Folkmann 2019, Part 1). Design cultures come into being through the agency of their objects and people, these cultures are fluid and dynamic, "both beings and becomings" (Folkmann 2019, p. 3) as they move beyond singular objects of design to multiple assemblages which require a shift in conception. The process of becoming relates to the complexity of the contexts within which design situates itself (ibid., p. 5) and therefore, design relations are in a constant state of flux. As an example, the global production and consumption of multinational brands have provoked counter-movements to enhance local production and cultural differences (Munch 2019, p. 173).

Huppatz (2015) suggests that design has a global consciousness; as a subject, it has an inherent understanding that we live in an interconnected and interdependent planet. The impact of improved communication technology and travel in the modernist era is significant in enabling designers and consumers to envisage themselves as part of "a global consciousness" (ibid., p. 193). In the context of global design consciousness or discourse, Sri Lanka's design and visual culture is as a peripheral one. Processes of diffusion, such as transferring British design education across borders, lend themselves to the study of spaces that have traditionally been designated as peripheries. Through diffusion, one can study the process of adoption, resistance, assimilation, adaptation, and transformation—a networked model rather than a one-way flow from the centre to the periphery (ibid., p. 194).

The changing nature of design culture lends itself to a critical study of a transnational academic partnership in design education. It provides a historical dimension to the understanding that social systems and cultures continuously change based on context. The connections between economic and social processes and the reordering of knowledge can be "obvious and oblique" (Loomba 2015, p. 79). Postcolonial discourse provides the critical vocabulary to articulate the links between the local, lived experiences of transnational design students and facilitators in Sri Lanka and the contextual nature of specific institutional and social structures which affect design education and professional practice.

2.5.2 Design Practice

Design as a discipline is far too diverse with multiple professional specialisms and variegated practices to have a singular definition (Julier, 2017). However, design in the twenty-first century has many descriptive definitions which identify the most important cause of the subject and point towards how that cause may be further explored in greater depth to allow individuals to make connections between distinct issues (Buchanan, 2001). For instance, Herbert Simon's definition (2001) of design devising courses of action to change existing situations into preferred ones identifies the most important cause of design practice as being future-oriented.

Design theorist Richard Buchanan provides an alternate, more formal definition that identifies several causes and brings them together—"design is the human power of conceiving, planning, and making products that serve human beings in the accomplishment of their individual and collective purposes" (Buchanan 2001, p. 9) In this definition, the word *power* implies the "agency of action in design" which is a natural talent that resides in human beings and can be cultivated or enhanced through education, making design an art of intervention with a universal scope as it can be applied to any product made by humans (ibid.).

The notion of power and agency is critical when discussing the orientation of design practice since designers can use their agency for divergent purposes. Walking into one of the graphics studios on the AOD campus during a field trip in 2019, I was greeted by a large display board listing graphic design careers (Figure 3). At the time, this tall board was being used as a temporary light barrier for seminars that used projections; its original purpose was to communicate the diverse professional opportunities offered to potential design students. As discussed in Section 1.2.2, as an academic institute that is part of a private business enterprise, AOD and its parent organisation, Design Corp, aim to build design awareness and catalyse economic growth in Sri Lanka by creating an eco-system for commercial design and training students in the creative skills and agency required to contribute the industry.

This capitalist orientation of design as a commercial practice follows modern design's alignment with neoliberal economic practices of free-market trade (Escobar, 2018). Products and services are designed for sale, environments are configured for use, images are intended to be viewed, and the success of any design falls under the neoliberal pressures of marketisation and differentiation (Julier, 2017). Many staff members at AOD and Northumbria University felt that the partnership between the two institutes was based on this common outlook of design education teaching students creative and problem-solving skills to meet industry standards in preparation for professional practice (Chapter 5). It is important to note that other orientations of design look past and are critical of growth and development: socially-oriented design, speculative design, and design as a situated and interactive practice, to name a few (Escobar, 2018). However, I focus on this capitalist orientation as it affects how the Northumbria design curriculum prepares students for professional practice in AOD, with Chapter 6 exemplifying the problems of a universal approach to design education and industry practice.

The official websites of AOD and Northumbria University's School of Design constantly

Figure 3 Graphic Studio 1, AOD Design Campus, February 2019.

refer to *the industry* in their institutional communications (AOD 2021, Northumbria University 2021). It's important to note that *the industry* is not a singular entity which suggests a homogenous space with the same commercial, financial, social and cultural arrangements (Julier, 2017). For instance, in 2016, the UK's creative industries generated over GBP £21 billion in turnover (Centre for Economics and Business Research, 2019). The UK also has professional bodies such as the Design Council, which actively promote the discipline and research on how design can add value to various industries outside the creative sector (Design Council, 2017 and 2020).

In contrast, as revealed in a recent baseline study of the creative and cultural industries in Sri Lanka (British Council and Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka, 2020), this sector lacks public and institutional support, investment, and robust data to provide insights on its current economic and social value for the nation. Some stores sell designed products in Colombo, such as Barefoot (Barefoot Ceylon, 2021), founded in 1964; Paradise Road (About | Paradise Road, 2021), founded in 1987; and Urban Island (Urban Island, 2021), a commercial retail initiative by AOD's founder, which started in 2018. Although they differ in their visual language, their product offerings focus on textiles and contemporary designed local handicrafts to support the artisanal craft communities of the island and do not involve industrial, mass manufacturing. Additionally, there is no professional association for creative practitioners in Sri

Lanka to represent their interests or steer development for the local design industry (British Council and Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka, 2020).

This thesis explores the complexities and tensions which arise when preparing students for professional design practice using a homogenous curriculum in heterogeneous, contextually specific spaces; England and Sri Lanka. Analysing these differences or specificities is critical. As illustrated in the findings of this research (Chapters 4—6), they affect a designer's agency to develop a creative practice that serves an individual or collective purpose.

2.6 TNE Partnerships: A Site for Cultural Transfers

Postcolonial scholars claim education as a site of cultural influence (Loomba, 2015; Rizvi et al., 2006; Said, 2003; Tikly, 1999). The internationalisation of higher education, specifically the export of educational services and qualifications, can assist cultural hegemony through cultural transfers. The term "cultural transfer" does not have a univocal meaning but encapsulates the global mobility of words, concepts, images, persons, commodities, money, and more (Rossini and Toggweiler, 2014). In the study of mobility, be it peoples, objects, images, texts, or ideas, Greenblatt et al. suggest analysing the "the contact zones where cultural goods are exchanged" (2009, p. 251). Contact zones are spaces where diverse cultures meet and grapple with one another in an unequal or asymmetrical relationship of dominance and subordination (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 233). As social spaces that facilitate cultural transfers, the consideration of contact zones provides context for identifying knowledge systems that follow colonial tropes of ignoring cultural differences to assert universalism.

Cultural transfers result in the formation of specialised groups of mobilisers or agents who facilitate contact and transfers (Greenblatt at al., 2009). In the context of TNE, universities in the UK delivering higher education courses overseas and the British Council as the UK's international organisation for fostering relationships with over a hundred countries "through arts and culture, education, and the English language" (British Council, 2020) can be classified as mobilisers. Transnational academic partnerships between British universities and their external partners become the contact zone for facilitating cultural transfers across borders through educational services, serving the interests of the British education industry.

The review of research and policies by British cultural mobilisers on the growth of transnational education services (Chapter 1, Section 1.3) revealed how hegemonic cultures in the global knowledge industry are defined by trade relations and the flow of capital. Altbach (2004, p.17) points out that when educational services are traded between nations, academic models and curriculum from the more powerful systems prevail. Rarely do academic innovations emanate from the periphery to the centre. TNE systems such as franchise programmes prescribe local institutes to host education curriculum from Britain with no curricular input, suggesting an automatic form of *elimination design* (Section 2.3), following colonial tropes of movement, in this case of design curriculum, from a declared centre to peripheries.

The motivations for British higher education institutes to engage in transnational academic partnerships of increasing student numbers, increasing institutional

reputation, and increasing income (British Council and Universities UK International Unit 2016, p. 70) also follows the colonial imagination of the UK being the knowledge centre and their partner nations providing access to tuition paying students or a market for financial gain. At the same time, the growth of TNE in postcolonial developing countries such as Sri Lanka is the result of demand for educational opportunities and readily available information technology to support the facilitation of such systems, creating ideal market conditions of demand and supply.

It has been identified by Altbach (1971) early on that the qualitative aspects of education, such as curriculum, have often been neglected in developing nations because efforts have been concentrated on quantitative expansion. Tikly (1999) has discussed how, in many former colonies, governments are still grappling with the highly contested and complex process of developing an education curriculum that is more suited to the cultures and histories of the local populace. The publication *Higher Education in the Developing World: Changing Contexts and Institutional Responses* exemplifies how, in many developing nations, higher education reform is often not the primary goal of governments and external agencies (Champman and Austin, 2002). Instead, higher education is a means to strengthen the workforce and support national economic development. Similarly, a UNESCO-IIEP report on the challenges for advancing higher education in the developing nations of the Commonwealth states that government intervention in such states is needed "to develop policy, provide a framework for action, and ensure equity and quality rather than to finance educational development" (Varghese 2011, p. 24).

Raising the quality of higher education in developing nations, for which curricular reform is crucial, is "one of the most difficult to achieve" because achieving higher quality education is an "elusive target" (Champman and Austin 2002, p. 257). Additionally, large scale curricular reform by higher education institutions is dependent on their academic staff, who often have little autonomy, training, or access to professional development to take on such endeavours (Altbach, 2013; Champman and Austin 2002; Tilak, 2020; Varghese, 2011). The literature suggests that developing higher education curriculum that is better suited to the local cultures of developing nations has, so far, been a neglected topic. Supporters of curricular reform might have to contend with the vested interests of local elites, a lack of resources, and the hegemony of Western culture and forms of knowledge in a globalised world (Tikly 1999, p. 613). As described in Section 2.2, in a postcolonial state like Sri Lanka, where Eurocentric education systems are an ambivalent part of the local culture, and ethnic conflict is rife, it is even more challenging to define what a culturally relevant design curriculum might include.

2.7 Critical Considerations and Research Implications

Postcolonial theorists have been criticised for their lack of interdisciplinarity in addressing the cultural consequences of globalisation (Moore-Gilbert 1997, p.186). For instance, Loomba (2015) has questioned whether the neglect of economic concerns in literature by postcolonial scholars, such as Said, makes them agents of global capitalism since neither global nor local cultures or hybrids can be thought about seriously without considering how economic systems shape them. Rizvi et al. (2006) also criticise postcolonialism for its complicity with the current structures of global

capitalism by not acknowledging how transnational trade and the desire for certain commodities are historically produced.

In consideration of these critiques, this chapter establishes that postcolonialism and globalisation occupy the same conceptual territory. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the continuing growth in the higher education sectors of developing countries in the Global South is to supply the demand for a skilled workforce to assist the economic development of these countries. Rizvi et al. (2006, p. 255) suggest that many neoliberal ideas today have become hegemonic because they are assumed to be natural responses to the economic facets of globalisation instead of being historically specific ideologies to serve the interests of transnational corporations and the financial elite.

Integrating postcolonial theory to the understanding of contemporary globalised systems can provide a "critical idiom" (Tikly, 2004) to analyse how neo-colonial inclinations of Western higher education are aided by historic imperial capitalism, followed by the unequal structuring of global markets. This critical idiom is of value in examining the transfer and translation of British design education in Sri Lanka to prepare students for professional practice since design practice involves creating products and services to serve human beings to help accomplish an individual or collective purpose (Buchanan, 2001). The findings chapters in this thesis highlight how specificities of context shape varying individual desires and collective purpose of design practitioners in England and Sri Lanka through narratives shared by students and alumni from AOD and Northumbria University.

To conclude, the value in using postcolonial discourse as the theoretical lens to examine transnational design education lies in the fact that postcolonial theory provides the basis for developing an inclusive account of the effects of globalisation on higher education in a postcolonial state. It is appreciative of the nuances of individual cultural contexts and does not swallow up complexity for the sake of a standard global narrative (Loomba, 2015). Using this critical lens, the empirical research design (detailed in Chapter 3) examines how the legacy of European colonialism in Sri Lanka affects the demand and facilitation of TNE in the host institute, AOD. It also informs the choice of research methods to gather and represent empirical data in ways that avoid hierarchical or authoritative relationships between a researcher and their participants.

In the broader context of neoliberal capitalism and a highly competitive global knowledge industry, imagining a more inclusive and equitable design education poses significant challenges. Nevertheless, this study intends to take a step towards identifying possibilities for a more equitable global future where international higher education moves beyond being a "profit centre" to pad the bottom line of universities engaged in the export of educational services (Altbach and Knight 2007, p. 304).

Ch. 3 A Para-Ethnographic Research Approach

The research design for this project was primarily influenced by anthropologists Holmes and Marcus (2006, 2008) and adopted a para-ethnographic approach which embraces collaboration and avoids power hierarchies based on expertise. Even though it is still being developed, as a concept, para-ethnography addresses the challenges of pursuing ethnography in new contexts of fieldwork and experiments in ethnographic methods in domains such as art and design (Holmes and Marcus 2008, p. 596). These experiments address a specific problem— pursuing a line of inquiry with participants who themselves are engaged in "intellectual labours that resemble approximately or are entirely indistinguishable from our own methodological practices" (ibid.). Para-ethnography ties in with the postcolonial approach by including diverse perspectives of multiple stakeholders as active participants and epistemic partners who not only inform the research, but shape its process and outcome.

This chapter begins with an evaluation of literature on developing a qualitative approach for the research design followed by how the literature influenced the field work. The empirical research for this project explored the franchise partnership between Northumbria University's School of Design and AOD, a private design institute offering students the opportunity to study Northumbria University's undergraduate design courses in Sri Lanka. Before engaging with participants in Colombo and Newcastle, issues around the benefits and limitations of insider research, the ethics of including former colleagues and students in an ethnographic study involving institutional stakeholders, and the realities of navigating multiple field sites across two countries had to be considered.

The project topic is at the intersection of four related but distinct topics: globalisation and the commodification of educational services; the internationalisation of higher education; transnational education systems; and design education (Figure 2). This multifaceted subject required a pluralist approach and engaged interdisciplinary methods to answer the research questions and offer new knowledge. As a trained visual communication designer and educator, my education and professional practice in design and design pedagogy have equipped me with the willingness to examine other disciplines and draw connections to the most appropriate methods to navigate the topic. This chapter demonstrates how integrating the anthropological method of ethnography with participatory design research can offer humanist insights which account for "the lived cultural worlds inhabited by designed things and their users" (Murphy and Marcus 2013, p. 252).

Methodological details and reflections on the research design have been included to strengthen the logic behind the methods used and clarify my intentions. As a design researcher with experience in and former knowledge of transnational design education, the project takes a critical and reflective stance. The chapter concludes with a discussion on narrative data analysis and the methods adopted for reviewing and analysing the empirical data gathered on the field.

3.1 A Qualitative Research Methodology

To address a knowledge gap in a field too often addressed through quantitative methods, this qualitative inquiry explores the power structures of knowledge; mainly how academic

knowledge is controlled by dominant powers as exemplified by Said in Orientalism (2003). Chapter 2 discussed the value of using postcolonial discourse as a theoretical lens to shape the research design and contextualise the findings. The research design for this project uses the critical lens of postcolonial discourse to frame themes of inquiry to answer the primary and secondary research questions and understand the value and effects of a British design education in its former colony.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the project has the following objectives: to understand the flow of knowledge in the form of a design curriculum from England to Sri Lanka from the perspective of stakeholders involved in the everyday teaching and learning of TNE at a franchise institute; to understand the qualitative aspects of facilitating a design curriculum at a TNE host institute; to explore the broader impact of TNE outside academia through the lens of professional design practice in Sri Lanka. The research design for this project had to be inter-disciplinary to do justice to the complexity of the topic and find methods appropriate to produce data which could answer the research questions. Collaborations between the social sciences and design can lead to a more "robust, theoretically informed, critical design research practice" (Plowman 2003, p. 38). Therefore, I reviewed literature from the social sciences to inform the various stages of the research design, which are different from the process of research in design practice. For example, the following list breaks down the research process from a social sciences perspective into four, linear stages of decision making (Crotty 1998, p. 5):

- What epistemology informs this theoretical perspective?
- What theoretical perspective guides the methodology?
- What methodology governs the choice of methods used?
- What methods were used to carry out the research?

In contrast, frameworks for design research and practice, such as the Double Diamond (Design Council, 2021) or Design Thinking (IDEO, 2021) follow a circular process of discovering a problem statement, defining a design challenge, and developing responses or solutions by using iterative methods based on critical reflection. According to Buchanan, a professor of design, one of the strengths of design as a discipline is that as a community, we have not settled on a singular definition of what the field involves since definitions can limit a field and make it lethargic or dead to advancing inquiry (2001, p. 8). Doing a qualitative investigation of the value and usability of British design education in Sri Lanka requires the consideration of human, social, and cultural factors where Buchanan (ibid., p. 16) suggests embracing the social sciences. As this project is interested in discovering new knowledge rather than innovating practical design solutions, the planning of the research design is presented in the following table by responding to the Crotty's questions to justify the research methodology and approach—

Epistemology >	Theoretical Perspective >	Methodology >	Methods >
Constructivist	Postcolonial	Para-ethnography	Interviews, Focus Groups, Observation, Design Workshops, Prototyping, Mapping

Table 1 The research design framework.

The social sciences produce knowledge about individuals, groups and institutions which raises epistemological questions about what is understood as knowledge and the ethics and politics of knowledge production (Cruickshank, 2020). Epistemology is the theory of knowledge embedded in a research project's theoretical perspective and methodology; it asks how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998). Taking on a postcolonial perspective that decries universalism meant the epistemological stance for the research design needed to be respectful to the community being researched by recognising the legitimacy of diverse worldviews and the plurality of knowledge. Therefore, the epistemological stance adopted for this project is constructivist. As stated in the Introduction, constructivism is a research paradigm under the philosophical umbrella of interpretivism which has the view that human beings actively construct knowledge "in their own subjective and intersubjective realities and in contextually specific ways" (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller 2014, p. 183).

The central tenet of interpretivism suggests that "people are constantly involved in interpreting their ever-changing world" (Williamson 2006, p. 84). Unlike the natural world, the social world is constituted by people whose agency is motivated by shared meanings rather than mechanical, determined processes of cause and effect (ibid.). By taking on a constructivist epistemological stance, this research assumes that reality is not external to human existence but locally constructed and based on shared experiences. Because groups and individuals are changeable, their constructed knowledge is a "relativist ontology" (Howell, 2013), thereby rejecting notions of universal or objective truths. Accepting that people construct their social world allows this research to align with the notion of a pluriverse where different cultures and epistemic traditions can respond to similar issues in different ways.

A theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance which informs the methodology, thus providing a context for the research process and grounding its logic and criteria (Crotty 1998). As detailed in the previous chapter, this research takes on postcolonialism's critical perspective to interrogate the value of teaching design knowledge which has been curated in Britain, in Sri Lanka, a postcolonial state. Postcolonial discourse will help deconstruct notions of universalism and question Western hegemony in the trade of educational services facilitated by global capitalism, aligning it with a critical constructivism approach which focuses on "challenging authoritative accounts of the world and interrogating the power structures that influence these accounts" (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014, p. 183).

A research methodology is the strategy used for selecting methods to gather and analyse data related to the research question(s) and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes (Crotty, 1998). As stated in Chapter 1 (section 1.4), most research on TNE is based on quantitative methods for data collection which are uncritical and from the perspective of institutions and nations which export educational services. This project adopts a para-ethnographic methodology to address the lack of qualitative insights on the facilitation and value of transnational education by focusing on a particular franchise partnership and the perspective of the institute hosting educational services.

Taking on a constructivist epistemological stance requires researchers to assume

reflexivity by locating themselves in the everyday realities of their study and examining how their interpretive frames, experiences, and interests influence their actions (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). It focuses on the relationships between researchers and their participants and how they impact knowledge generated during and after a study (ibid.). The empirical research generated during the second and third year of this project explores this type of knowledge production sought in a constructivist paradigm: shared meanings of everyday practices amongst identified groups of diverse stakeholders. To offer new knowledge which was not an abstract social construction but a form of social practice, an ethnomethodological approach using ethnographic and participatory design research methods was the obvious choice. Combining these methods allowed me to situate myself in the everyday reality of my research participants and collaboratively generate empirical data on situated knowledge and competencies required to navigate the social and translocal practices of TNE.

The para-ethnographic study, which is the source of all empirical data generated in this research, considered how stakeholders in a particular TNE partnership understand institutional work processes, how they attach meaning to actions or objects, and what motivates them to engage in such educational systems. Insights on the everyday practice of TNE partnerships can reveal new knowledge and enhance skills and competencies that the work relies upon. By sharing the perspectives of diverse stakeholders involved in one example of such partnerships, the study was designed to provide a more contextually aware and detailed picture of transnational design education.

3.2 Conducting Research as an Insider

In the central province of Sri Lanka, a village in the Kandy district is home to a community of traditional Dumbara handloom weavers. Historically, they made textiles for Sri Lanka's royal families as the technique takes tremendous skill and time, making this craft a heritage treasure. Today it has a waning interest as a practice and is in need of new patronage. In November 2014, I accompanied a group of graphic design students on a field trip to the Dumbara Valley. We were meeting some of the artisans to see their craft and equipment first hand. The natural landscapes surrounding the artisan's houses are breathtaking. Our enthusiastic host insisted on taking us to a nearby waterfall after giving us a tour of his home and workspace, assuring us it was a short hike up the side of the hill and would take no time at all.

It was raining the whole time we were there, and we were not prepared for a tropical downpour. Someone suggested we do the hike barefoot to avoid ruining our shoes since it was soft grass and earth on the way up. It sounded like an excellent idea at the time. Unfortunately, we had not anticipated leeches, the thorny plants in the dense undergrowth, or part of the group getting lost. The memory of removing leeches from the back of our legs and between our toes made me more cautious of spontaneous decisions on future field trips. However, it only strengthened my resolve to continue facilitating and engage in such immersive experiences.

It is essential to state that this research is from an insider's perspective on TNE as I have experience teaching and facilitating the Northumbria University undergraduate graphic design curriculum at AOD. Considering my insider status, before developing the research design and immersing myself in the field, planning the research design

had to account for ethical concerns. First, having prior knowledge on the functioning of a TNE franchise partnership requires an establishment of my standpoint and bias from the onset which has been stated in the thesis Introduction. In this project, I take on the role of a "cultural broker" (Wasson, Butler and Copeland-Carson 2012, p. 13); that is a researcher who identifies and communicates new practices and knowledge to facilitate TNE which will help us understand the social, economic, and cultural value of such globalised knowledge systems.

My lived experience as a former transnational design educator became preliminary epistemological research towards this project. My insights on student motivation, Northumbria University's curriculum design, pedagogy, and logistics helped shape the lines of inquiry for the research design. The value of being an insider is having an insightful and reflective approach for conducting research within a setting where I was formerly part of the cultural unit. This position can offer deep, contextual understandings through an insider's cultural tacit knowledge, which may be harder to achieve from an external positioning (Teusner, 2019). Being an insider provides a certain depth of knowledge, but it also requires a demonstration of reflection and reflexivity (ibid.). This meant being self-aware and critical of my own biases at the time of facilitating research activities and being reflective during the process of analysis.

Given the time frame of this project and the logistic limitations of being the only researcher involved, the scope of the field study included senior members of staff with roles in management, academic staff and students from the Graphic Design department in both institutes, and academic staff and students from the Design Foundation department at AOD. The reason for choosing the Graphic Design department lies in the fact that I have worked as an academic tutor in this department and know some of the academic staff involved in the partnership. The benefit of my insider position was having pre-established relationships with the networks associated with the system of study and a pre-existing element of trust. However, due to the familiarity, addressing ethical issues of securing consent and ensuring the confidentiality of views expressed by former colleagues and personal acquaintances was crucial.

Securing access to a field site can require researchers to go through official channels to obtain permissions from those who have the authority to grant it. Although I went through a process of contacting members of the academic and management team to seek permission to carry out my field research, given my insider status, the process was not an obstacle to overcome but rather a polite courtesy to make my field trips official. At the start of the second year of this project, I had the opportunity to visit both institutes. In September 2018, Northumbria University's design department hosted the Graphic Design Educators Network conference, where I had the opportunity to present a paper. The next month the AOD hosted Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Sri Lanka, an event established in the country in 2016 by the founder of AOD which I was invited to attend. Held over four days, the event included symposiums in addition to runway shows on the following themes: Sustainable Fashion; Leadership; Female Futures; and Design Education in the 21st Century.

While in Sri Lanka, I was treated as a member of the 'AOD team' and asked to help

former colleagues host foreign delegates during the event and present a summer school programme developed in-house at the symposium on design education. The objective of these preliminary field trips was to meet with former colleagues in Newcastle and Colombo, introduce them to my PhD research and invite them to be participants in my para-ethnographic study. The visits also brought me up to speed on the state of the academic partnership between AOD and Northumbria University.

Meeting former colleagues from both institutes as well as alumni in Colombo in October 2018 helped re-establish my relationships with relevant stakeholders which, in my opinion, played a key role in recruiting participants and having them accommodate my requests to make time for the field study. However, my current and previous professional affiliations with AOD required special considerations to protect participants' rights. Additionally, as stakeholders of a workplace, there was an element of institutional hierarchy in the pool of staff participants at AOD. I had to consider issues such as discomfort or hesitation in freely expressing one's opinions in the presence of colleagues or potential conflicts of interest among participants being revealed during research activities. Invited participants also included members of staff who were no longer part of AOD, ensuring the confidentiality of views expressed by former colleagues was essential.

To clarify such ethical concerns, the ethnographic study went through review and approval by the Research Ethics Committee at the Edinburgh College of Art in May 2018 (Appendix 1.1). Additionally, the research objectives, all forms of data collection as well as data use and dissemination were articulated in a 'Participant Information Sheet' (Appendix 1.2) and shared with all invited participants to give them the opportunity to make an informed choice to take part. Establishing participants' rights became a part of the research invitation process, and the following measures were implemented during the field research and in the process of data analysis to safeguard the participants' rights:

- All participants were asked to keep the information sheet and make a note of the ECA postgraduate re-search office to address or discuss any concerns.
- Employment hierarchies and dynamics between current and former members of staff were considered while planning research activities to acknowledge power differentials (Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and the Commonwealth, 2011), assure trust, and avoid a potential conflict of interest. As a result, research activities with all current and former staff were restricted to one-to-one interviews and participant observation only.
- Participants were given the option to receive copies of written interpretations and research reports written from the fieldwork.
- Information and opinions provided are not being linked to any individual participant and all data provided is being anonymised. Participants will also be referred to anonymously in all publications arising from the project.
- Should any participant choose to withdraw from the study, all data referring to them will be immediately destroyed.

An ethnographic account is a written account of a selection of aspects of a specific culture and carries with it a serious moral responsibility since the images of others inscribed in writing can and often do inform judgement by pointing to the choices

and restrictions that reside at the very heart of social life (Van Maanen, 2011). As a former insider, I felt a moral responsibility to present the ethnographic accounts shared by former colleagues, students, and in general, stakeholders closely involved in a former workplace with careful consideration, especially if their perspectives were different from my own. In acknowledgement of these concerns and considering the literature on ethnographic research (Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and the Commonwealth, 2011; Creswell and Creswell 2018; Madison, 2012; European Association of Social Anthropologists, 2018; and Hammersley, 2004), the following strategies were employed to ensure authenticity of data collection:

- Clarification of research bias: at the outset of this thesis, my role and standpoint as the sole researcher and potential bias have been articulated.
- Being there: to allow for 'ethnographic realism' (Hammersley 2004, p. 241), the field experience involved direct experiences with and around participants by engaging in research activities on-site in Colombo and Newcastle. This way, the everyday activities and interactions between participants could be observed and compared to information collected during interviews and focus groups.
- Triangulation: data was collected from multiple stakeholders using multiple methods. Additional data sources to compliment the first-hand accounts included institutional documents, photographs, and participant observation (Twining et al., 2017).
- Presenting contradicting views or information: considering the qualitative nature of this study, there were diverse perspectives shared by the participants. This thesis presents contradicting views to the general outlook of transnational education gathered from the literature review in Chapter 1. The lived experience of participants provides a more realistic account of the subject and ensures the complexity of data collected (Brewer 2004, p.406).
- Transferability: this project provides detailed descriptions and participant narratives to offer coherent, analytical accounts of the data (Crabtree et al. 2012; Geertz, 1973). This is to aid the transferability of knowledge gained by providing a detailed framework for comparison.

In addition to procuring informed consent from all research participants, safeguarding their rights, and ensuring the authenticity of all data gathered, a para-ethnographic approach helped avoid hierarchical, binary relationships of researcher and informant. Recognising participants as knowledgeable collaborators allowed for an in-depth, critical exploration of complexities embedded in TNE systems. The candour expressed in several ethnographic accounts included in the following chapters exemplifies the value of adopting this type of approach to reveal the complexity of human experience and the challenges embedded in translocal practices at a time of global flow and connectedness.

3.3 Para-ethnography: Combining Ethnography and Participatory Design Research

My intention as a researcher with a background in visual communication design and an insider's perspective on the subject is to do "research into art and design" and "research through art and design" (Frayling 1993, p. 5). These phrases were coined by Christopher Frayling, the former rector at the Royal College of Art, to describe two of three models of design research which also includes "research for art and design" (ibid.). Research *into* art and design, which includes a PhD thesis (ibid.), involves

researching a variety of theoretical perspectives on art and design. As stated, my practice overlaps design and design pedagogy and, in this case, my research into art and design is an exploration of the value of transnational education, specifically, British design education in a different social, economic and cultural context. The field research into design, or design education, involved ethnographic methods of interviews, focus groups, and observation.

The advantage of exploring ethnography to do research *into* transnational design education is that it allows for direct contact and experiences with the relevant people and places in their natural setting (Fetterman 1982). By providing detailed qualitative data, it can highlight intricacies and subtle realities, which provide holistic explanations which focus on processes and relationships that lie beyond "surface events" (ibid., p. 90). Ethnographic methods help put a social world in context rather than abstracting specific aspects in isolation. There is an open and explicit awareness of the role of the researcher's self in the choice of topic, process, research design, and construction of findings and conclusions. As a qualitative method, ethnography is suggested to be the "most significant leverage point" between design and the social science of anthropology to develop a humanist approach to design which accounts for the lived experience and cultural worlds inhabited by designed things and their users (Murphy and Marcus 2013, p. 254).

Subsequently, research *through* art and design includes action research and the communication of all designed activities and processes (Frayling 1993, p. 5) which, in this project, involved participatory design methods such as workshops, mapping, and prototyping exercises (detailed in section 3.5.3). The combination of ethnography and participatory design methods makes this project inter-disciplinary. As a design historian, Margolin has described design as a practice that continues to redefine itself as designers invent new subject matter as they take on unprecedented projects, making the discipline pluralistic and open to collaboration (2005, p. 290). Research at the intersection of design and anthropology, in particular, is not a new phenomenon. Design anthropology is a growing transdisciplinary field that is exploring, for example, how theory and practice can move research from observation, interpretation and critique to collaboration, intervention and co-creation (Gunn, Otto, and Smith, 2013; Miller, 2018) and the issues that shape our increasingly complex material world (Clarke, 2017).

Ethnography acknowledges the inherent reflexivity of social knowledge and when used in conjunction with participatory methods *through* design, can democratise design practice as "insights flowing from social science" requires the researcher to think critically about processes, outcomes, and human interaction (Plowman 2013, p. 35). Interdisciplinarity, or drawing from ethnographic and participatory design methods provided an empirical research strategy which ties in with the ethical need for a reflective research practice discussed in the Section 3.2.

As a discipline centred around learning by doing, transformation, and problem solving (Cross 2006; Schön, 1983), research is an inherent part of the design process as designers constantly research the information needed to tackle the tasks they face (Crouch and Pearce, 2012). For this project, adopting a postcolonial perspective and

para-ethnography meant the task of research design required identifying methods that would allow stakeholders invested in TNE to become active participants. In response to this design challenge, I explored participatory design, a human-centred design approach that advocates for active user and stakeholder engagement throughout the research and design process through co-design activities (Martin and Hanington, 2012). Participatory design comprises of many methods which have a unifying philosophy— the methods must "involve active consultation with users, clients, and other stakeholders in the design process, ideally through face-to-face contact in activity-based co-design engagements" (ibid., p. 128). The designer intends to gain insights from participants to help guide the creative process and outcome and translate the creative collaboration into design criteria, services, or artefacts (ibid.).

Participatory design is helpful in the design of Things; that is not objects and things, but socio-material assemblies such as workplaces (Björgvinsson et al., 2012), or in this case, studying sites facilitating transnational design education. With roots in movements forwarding the democratisation of workplaces in Scandinavian countries in the 1970s, participatory design started from the simple standpoint that stakeholders affected by a design should have a say in the design process (ibid.). Participatory design also has a role for non-human participants, namely visual devices such as prototypes, mock-ups, and sketches. Such devices are material presenters that can support communication or participation in the design process (ibid., p. 106). Developing these research tools or devices (detailed in section 3.6) was an essential part of the research design as they provided a common point of reference across different stakeholder groups who participated in the research.

A constructivist epistemology views a collaborative nature of knowledge production as an asset to the research process and uses it by bridging scientists' expertise, or a design researcher's expertise in this case, with the expertise of research participants' (Hershberg, 2014). This approach dictates studies that can only be done using methods where research can be conducted in a "natural" setting, that is, an everyday setting, rather than in the artificial environment created (ibid.). A para-ethnographic research approach that embraces collaboration and avoids power hierarchies based on expertise (Holmes and Marcus, 2006; 2008) and using ethnographic and participatory design methods in the two field sites (detailed in Section 3.5 and 3.6) allowed for such a collaborative nature of knowledge production by facilitating active, skilful participation and reflection.

Finally, para-ethnography helps elucidate this combination of ethnography and participatory design methods as it allows researchers to employ various ethnographic and qualitative approaches to examine the shifting conditions of their intellectual practices (Holmes and Marcus, 2008). The intellectual practice here is an interdisciplinary research project studying the facilitation of TNE; the collaborative orientation of para-ethnography helped navigate domains of contradictions and exceptions in the facilitation of TNE and conducting research as an insider with former colleagues. By redefining the status of the informants to partners who are expert agents "who actively participate in shaping emergent social realms" (ibid., p. 597), any hierarchies between me as a researcher and my participants were destabilised by acknowledging their expertise. Their shared experiences and the

para-ethnographic narratives generated in response to the lines of inquiry are the sources of new knowledge presented in this thesis for future considerations in the design of TNE systems.

3.4 Further Considerations for Ethnographic Design Research

In this research, the object of ethnographic inquiry is a system of education where design knowledge is commodified as educational services and traded across national borders. The ethnographic study of a franchised partnership between the two educational institutes had to be designed to offer various perspectives on TNE from participants directly involved in the everyday practice of such systems from the context in which they work and learn. This posed the challenge of navigating field sites which were functioning academic institutions situated in two countries over five thousand miles apart. Empirically following the thread of cultural processes, or in this case, educational services, necessitates the move toward multi-sited ethnography since following connections and relationships are at the very heart of designing multi-sited ethnographic research (Marcus, 1995). Multi-sited ethnography has emerged within the field of ethnography in response to more complex objects of study, specifically those that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation (Marcus 1995, p. 96).

One type of multi-sited ethnography is to "follow the thing" (ibid., p. 106) or trace the object of study's circulation through different contexts. Following the object, or service, is the most common approach for ethnographic studies of processes in a capitalist world system where the object of ethnographic inquiry is moving (Marcus 2011, p. 25), making it appropriate for an ethnographic study of TNE.

Multi-sited research is designed around the conjunction of locations where the ethnographer establishes some form of literal presence with an explicit logic of connection among sites that defines the argument of study (Marcus 1995, p. 105). This ethnographic study considered how stakeholders in the TNE partnership between AOD and Northumbria University understand and navigate institutional processes; how they attach meaning to actions or objects; and what motivates them. Insights on these topics could potentially shape TNE practices and enhance skills and competencies that the work relies on. Gathering such insights required engaging with stakeholders connected across the two institutions.

While operating in distributed knowledge systems, the challenge of fieldwork is figuring out how to work within the network (Marcus 2011, p.24). Marcus elaborates that a distributed knowledge system cannot be mapped out before the fieldwork; it is mapped as a function of fieldwork itself. The various stakeholders identified across the two institutes are nodes of a British-Sri Lankan TNE partnership; the relationships between these nodes are multiple and multifaceted. The benefit of being an insider was getting access to the network being studied by having existing professional and personal relationships with some nodes of the AOD and Northumbria TNE network. As a former employee, I also began with a contextual understanding of the network itself. For instance, every disciplinary department in AOD was connected to their parallel department in Northumbria University by a nominated link tutor who was to provide support and guidance.

According to Marcus (1995), multi-sitedness represents three things:

- the objective relations of a system that can be studied independently of traditional ethnography, such as an online network
- the connections set into play as an artefact of the research design
- a para-ethnographic perspective

The notion of multi-sitedness impacted the field research in the following ways; first, it emphasised the importance of processual, translocal connections between the two field sites to understand interactions between stakeholders and the circulation of resources. Second, this project adopted a para-ethnographic approach where the lines of inquiry were open-ended, and the research activities were semi-structured and experimental, giving agency to the participants to lead the study in unexpected directions. Third, the process of inquiry in multi-sited ethnography involves an exercise in mapping terrain, not ethnographically portraying a world system in totality (ibid., p. 99); the research analysis process used visual mapping to discuss the various nodes of connection within a distributed system like TNE.

Having two sites also required consideration of the transferability of the research activities between the two institutes. The overlap in the research methods between the sites to ensure consistency is detailed in Section 3.5. The host institute, AOD, plays a more significant role in the facilitation of TNE in this partnership and became the primary site. Northumbria University plays a vital role in transferring its curriculum to AOD. Still, fewer people are involved in the actual delivery, making it the secondary site in terms of the pool of engaged participants and the amount of time allocated for empirical research.

An overview of 'institutional ethnography' (Smith 2005; De Vault and McCoy, 2001) shaped my understanding and considerations for conducting research as an insider in an institutional setting in a manner which would not be disruptive to everyday work practices while revealing hidden processes and actions crucial to facilitating TNE but not acknowledged in institutional systems. Institutional ethnography is a research approach to answer how everyday life is organised (Tummons, 2018). This approach recognises that localised everyday work practices are always linked to the translocal; that is, social and administrative spaces which are outside the boundaries of a person's everyday experience (ibid.). Translocal coordination is true in TNE systems where the facilitation of education is dependent on information technologies to coordinate between two academic institutes.

An institution is a complex system embedded in ruling relations organised around a distinctive function (Smith, 2005). In this case, the function is the delivery and management of a TNE design programme. The concept of ruling relations in institutional ethnography is defined as the distinctive translocal forms of social organisation and relations mediated by institutional texts: documents, emails, or messages over the phone (Smith, 2005). Institutions generate power through the coordinating functions of language and text as the texts that regulate institutions establish agency. The term agency in this context is defined as the textually specified capacity to control and mobilise the work of others (ibid.). Institutional ethnographies can reveal the organising power of texts by revealing how local activities are coordinated and managed transnationally (Devault, 2006).

A significant number of tasks in the functioning of TNE systems require translocal forms of coordination between members of academic and administrative staff based in two nations. As discussed in Chapter 1 (section 1.3), overseas coordination is essential work to facilitate an educational system where curriculum, rather than students, cross national borders. The overview of literature on institutional ethnography impacted the field research in two ways; first, I included textual documents in data gathered to explore "text-reader conversation" (Tummons, 2018). An example of text reader conversation in this project includes academic tutors in a TNE host institute receiving module guides from the sending institute to prepare for a course (Appendix 2.3). These documents specify "the ways in which "texts permit, legitimise, or forbid certain forms of social action" (Tummons 2018, p. 149).

Second, I considered the notion of ruling relations in formulating questions for interviews to understand how members of staff make meaning of and adapt intuitional texts to suit their contextual needs, thereby, revealing work knowledge (Smith, 2005). During my time at AOD, I was privy to certain forms of textual coordination shared with staff. For example, module guides, staff meeting agendas, documents illustrating developments to streamline work processes, and even plans for the imminent move to a new building and its implications on the work culture. These documents which were shared by participants during the field research supplement the empirical data gathered in the analysis process by providing visual and textual references to ethnographic accounts and institutional policies.

The concept of work generally refers to what people are paid to do. In institutional ethnography, work is a more generous concept which includes any activity that people do which takes time, effort, intent, and some amount of competence; such work is not always remunerated (Smith, 2005; Tummons 2018). Observing people in the context of their workspace can reveal what activities constitute work, particularly those tasks which fall outside job descriptions but become essential everyday practices. I was interested in gathering insights into the nature of interactions amongst staff to identify institutional forms of coordination, in the case of TNE, interactions and the manifestation of power and agency are not locally observable as they take place over institutional texts and emails.

Institutional ethnography as a framework for inquiry encouraged the consideration of work practices that cannot be seen and being situated at AOD and Northumbria University helped identify unseen work practices with concerned stakeholders. AOD's academic staff and students uploading digital files of student work to a server for moderation in Northumbria University are examples of this type of work which is essential for a TNE programme in design. Based on institutional ethnography's framework of inquiry (Smith, 2005), the approach to fieldwork was one of discovery. Having an open-ended line of inquiry uncovered unexpected social relationships between AOD and Northumbria University implicated in the local organisation of everyday activities. These insights are detailed in the following chapters.

The following sections describe the ethnographic and design methods used to gather data while on the field. It is essential to state that the research paradigm of this project is qualitative and ethnomethodological, but as formerly mentioned, being

based in design, it takes on a pluralist approach. Using postcolonial discourse as a theoretical lens while selecting research methods that combine ethnographic and participatory design processes for empirical research had certain implications. First, I wanted to create opportunities for participants to co-create perspectives on various issues where possible. While the interview was an important method for empirical research, I wanted to make room for "collectivist perspectives" (Viruru and Cannella 2006, p.184) which is why I also facilitated focus groups discussions and workshops where the individual is not the basic social unit.

Second, I wanted the research to be respectful and beneficial to the community being researched. Bagele Chilisa, a scholar specialising in postcolonial, indigenous research methodology, suggests making the researched active participants and using methods informed by the community's norms and behaviours (Chilisa, 2012). As discussed previously, adopting a para-ethnographic approach makes those being researched active epistemic partners. Additionally, the research methods described below were designed to be sympathetic to the interests of the research participants who are part of a community of creative practitioners who teach, learn, and practice design. The participatory methods were an opportunity to use activities that were hands-on, required a collaborative effort, and involved prototyping; in effect, use methods that are central to contemporary design discourses (Bjögvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren, 2012).

3.5 Research *into* Transnational Design Education

Adopting a collaborative, para-ethnographic approach makes this research people-centric; this section expands on the research participants who contributed to the project, the lines of inquiry used to engage participants, and the multiple research methods employed to gather empirical data. Teachers, administrators, and policymakers are traditionally viewed as those in the know and, as a result, tend to be the respondents of choice in educational studies (Gubrium and Holstein 2001, p. 459). While my respondents did include stakeholders viewed as those in the know, my strategy was to invite a diverse but theoretically significant number of individuals to participate. This meant inviting stakeholders who are or have been directly involved in the AOD - Northumbria University partnership. In addition to teachers, administrators, senior management, and students, I also invited alumni to have a diverse pool of participants.

The following stakeholders' perspectives were identified as crucial to the project:

- Senior management who are or have been involved in institutional internationalisation and the management of this transnational partnership.
- Administrative staff who are or have been involved in the facilitation and maintenance of the partnership.
- Past and present academic staff in both institutes who teach and administer the design curriculum.
- Current students enrolled in the BA (Hons) Graphic Design course and Design Foundation at AOD.
- Graduates of the BA (Hons) Graphic Design course at AOD.

Ethnographic methods help establish common patterns and themes between

Name (Sex)	Stakeholder Group	Acitivity	Location	Experience
Amanda (F)	Senior Management	Interview	AOD, Colombo	7 years
Amila (M)	Alumni (2015)	Focus Group	AOD, Colombo	3 years
Ananya (F)	Alumni (2015)	Focus Group	AOD, Colombo	3 years
Ayesha (F)	Academic Staff + Alumni (2016)	Focus Group	AOD, Colombo	4 years
Chaturi (F)	Academic Staff + Alumni (2010)	Interview + Focus Group	AOD, Colombo	10 years
Claire (F)	Senior Management	Interview	AOD, Colombo	9 years
Cole (M)	Senior Management	Interview	AOD, Colombo	8 years
Emma (F)	Academic Staff	Interview	AOD, Colombo	3 years
Hugo (M)	Academic Staff	Interview	AOD, Colombo	9 years
Gayathri (F)	Alumni (2017)	Focus Group	AOD, Colombo	4 years
George (M)	Academc Staff	Interview	Northumbria University, Newcastle	8 years
Janani (F)	Alumni (2015)	Focus Group	AOD, Colombo	3 years
Kalpani (F)	Alumni (2016)	Focus Group	AOD, Colombo	3 years
Lucy (F)	Administrative Staff	Interview	AOD, Colombo	8 years
Mary (F)	Academc Staff	Interview	AOD, Colombo	4 years
Purvi (F)	Alumni (2017)	Focus Group	AOD, Colombo	3 years
Roshan (M)	Alumni (2017)	Focus Group	AOD, Colombo	4 years
Senuri (F)	Alumni (2015)	Focus Group	AOD, Colombo	4 years
Toby (M)	Senior Management	Interview	Northumbria University, Newcastle	10 years

Table 2 Field research participants' pseudonyms, stakeholder groups, and backgrounds.

particular types of respondents (Gubrium and Holstein, 2001). My intention was to invite participants who had adequate experience in TNE systems to provide reflexive responses based on their lived experience. Therefore, an important criterion for inviting participants was the amount of time spent by an individual in the AOD-Northumbria partnership in their role as a student or employee. Therefore, I did not invite any new staff members to participate in interviews, and all invited alumni had at least a year of experience working in the local industry. The collective experience of the eight interview participants at AOD in varying roles over time in senior management, as students, academic staff, and administrative staff amounts to significant and multiple perspectives on TNE and diverse narratives of facilitating such cross border systems of education. The group includes two men and six women from Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Canada. The two participants I interviewed in Newcastle, George and Toby, were British academics who have been actively working towards developing the university's transnational academic partnerships for several years as an academic link tutor and a member of senior management.

The participant list also included ten AOD students who graduated in the year 2017 or earlier and comprises eight women and two men who currently live and work in the local industry in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The students who participated in the study are not listed individually as I interacted with them in groups in workshop settings that did not allow for in-depth interaction with participants. In total, the ethnographic field study across Colombo and Newcastle involved seventy-five active participants across ten interviews, two focus groups, and four participatory design workshops (Table 2 and 3). By giving a voice to the diverse stakeholders involved in one example of such partnerships, the study was designed to provide a more contextually aware and detailed picture of the state of the art of transnational design education.

Programme / Education Year	Number of Participants	Workshop Details
Year 3 BA (Hons) Graphic Design	8 students	2.5 hours. AOD Graphics Studio.
Year 2 BA (Hons) Graphic Design	12 students	2.5 hours. AOD Graphics Studio.
Year 1 BA (Hons) Graphic Design	14 students	2.5 hours. AOD Graphics Studio.
Design Foundation	22 students	12.5 hours spread across 3 days. AOD Design Foundation Studio.

Table 3 Design workshop participants at AOD, February 2019.

The questions put forward to the participants were designed to gain perspectives on TNE as a system of teaching and learning which is at the intersection of several topics: globalisation and capitalist systems, the postcolonial state of Sri Lanka, developing a transnational community of academic practice, the social perception of design in Sri Lanka, and the state of design as a professional practice in the country. As per Gubrium and Holstein (2001, p.85), qualitative interviews are guided conversations where researchers are listening to understand the true meaning of what is being said. The researcher makes inferences from three sources: what people say, the way they act, and the artefacts they use (ibid.). To gather data on what people say, how they act, and identify artefacts they use, I had to interact with participants based in two institutions placed in different continents on a limited budget and within the time frame of a three-year doctoral project.

The research constraints meant designing a line of inquiry which could help gather diverse perspectives from several participants in a short amount of time. Although most questions presented to the various stakeholders were the same to ensure consistency across the two sites, I designed multiple questionnaires, with overlapping question based on the type of engagement and the experience of the respondents which can be viewed in Appendix 1.4. The participants were clustered into four groups with associated questionnaires: academic, administrative, and management staff at AOD; AOD alumni; AOD students; and academic, administrative, and management staff at Northumbria University. The opening question to all seventy-five research participants was the same as the primary research question for this project— *what is the value of a British design education in a social, economic, and cultural context different from its own?* The concept of value was kept open-ended to get candid responses that might shape the understanding of the term value for this project. The primary and secondary research questions were then used as a framework for developing the themes and individual questions which had several overlaps in terms of which group they were presented to (Figure 4).

A common theme explored in all the questionnaires was *internationalisation*. AOD's partnership with Northumbria University can be seen as an effort to 'internationalise' the institute to keep up with the demands of globalised societies. Since TNE is a product of globalisation and AOD is based in Sri Lanka, a post-colonial state, I wanted the participants' take on what makes their institute international, and conversely, in the case of participants in AOD, what makes it Sri Lankan. Here my intention was not to assign characteristics or reaffirm biases towards something as complex as a nation's culture or identity, but to gather perspectives on what makes the institute AOD contextually specific.

Postcolonial theory discusses concepts of homogenisation and Western superiority in terms of new modes of imperialism through cultural dominance (Moore-Gilbert, 1997). Discussing internationalisation with stakeholders involved in a design education system which defined one directional flow of knowledge transfer from the Global North to the South was essential in confronting notions of neo-colonialism. Hybrid systems, such as TNE, can mask systemic hierarchies, or present 'the old system in a new guise' (ibid., p. 194), i.e., of Western cultural dominance under the guise of cultural hybridisation.

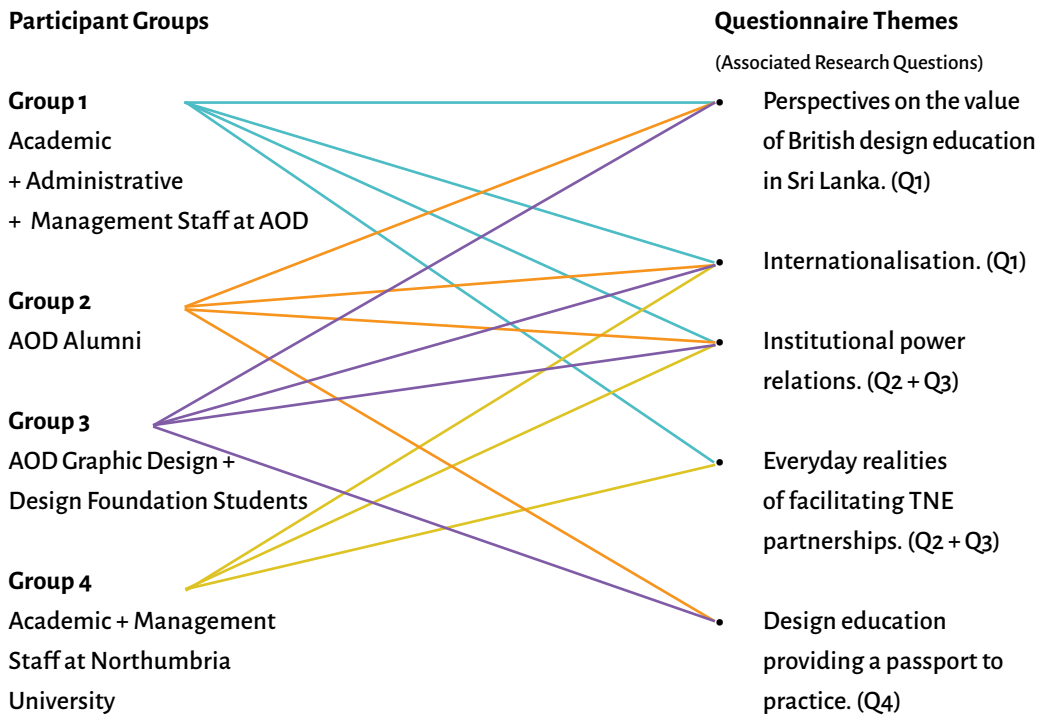


Figure 4 Questionnaire themes and associated participant groups.

There were also lines of inquiry which were stakeholder specific and presented to certain groups. For instance, part one of the questionnaire designed for Group 1, 2, and 3 (Figure 4) explored perspectives on transnational education in Sri Lanka and the AOD-Northumbria partnership specifically. For example, participants were asked to comment on whether the UNESCO definition of TNE matched their experience of being a part of such a system followed by questions on their motivations to invest in TNE. Participants were also asked questions on the effects of colonialism and the perception of Western education in Sri Lanka, particularly, if the affiliation of a British University affects the perceived value of a local design institute. One additional question put forth to all staff and alumni at AOD asked for responses to an article from the National Education Commission of Sri Lanka (Stephen, 2007) on the relevance of a foreign degree in Sri Lanka and its perceived contribution to the socio-economic development of the country.

Part two of the questionnaire designed for Group 1 and 4 (Appendix 1.4) was specific to these stakeholders as the questions explored the theme of everyday realities of facilitating TNE partnerships. The literature review of policies on transnational education discussed in Chapter 1 showed evidence of one-sided knowledge flows with the UK exporting its education curriculum to other countries with no input from the host institutes. The current British council definition of a TNE franchise

partnership as one where a 'sending higher education institute authorises a host institute to deliver its programme, with no curricular input by the host institution and all study taking place in the host country' (British Council and McNamara Economic Research, 2013) further perpetuates Britain's academic and in turn cultural dominance. Most questions in this section were to understand whether the facilitation of a TNE franchise adhered to or challenged the official definitions and frameworks.

While engaging with members of academic, administrative, and management staff at the two sites, the questions aimed to eillicit responses which detailed their everyday academic practice and identify gaps in the work taken to facilitate the TNE partnership. The common line of inquiry presented specifically to students and alumni (Groups 3 and 4) was on the notion of a passport to practice, which involved a design exercise using the concept of a "passport to design practice" (Tovey, 2015). This line of inquiry focused on the recipients of a TNE education in design and aimed to understand how that experience shaped their professional practice or access to professional opportunities. As detailed in Appendix 1.4, each questionnaire was curated to facilitate cultural and contextual inferences and procure narratives of a given social world to then use for analysis. The format was structured with predetermined questions in a set order to make the most of the limited time with the participants. However, the questions were all open-ended, which allowed for modifications and diversions based on the flow of the conversations or group discussions.

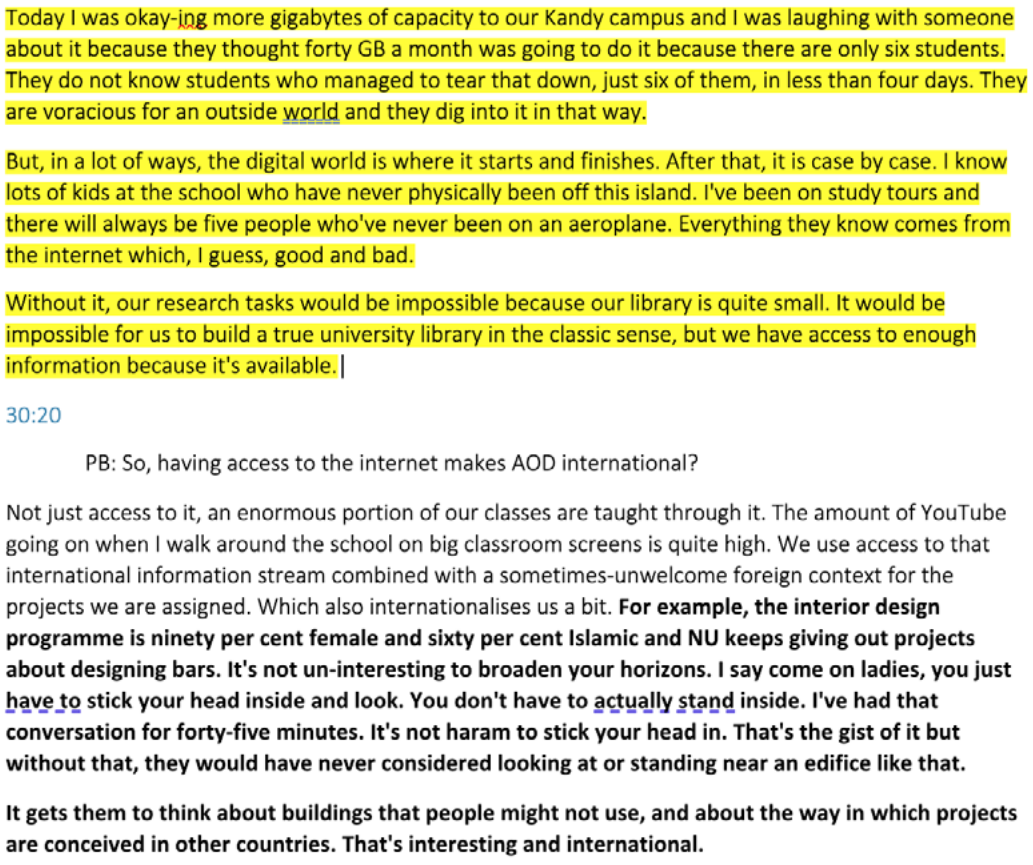
In January 2019, I began formally inviting potential participants over email, specifically, members of academic and management staff at AOD and Northumbria University and alumni to participate in the study. From February 11th to March 10th in 2019, I spent four weeks in Colombo conducting fieldwork. During that time, I was based at the AOD campus to situate myself in the everyday context of my field site. My time was spent conducting interviews with staff, facilitating focus group discussions with alumni, conducting design workshops with current students, and teaching screen-printing to first-year graphic design students. The screen-printing workshop was part of an informal agreement with AOD to access the campus and students for conducting research. Members of staff and alumni had signed up to participate in interviews and focus groups and by collaborating with the graphic design and design foundation departments' programme leaders, design workshops and taught sessions with current students were scheduled into the academic timetable. Most of my schedule was organised before my departure to make the most of my time in Sri Lanka, and to my surprise, most of the interviews and all focus groups and workshops went according to plan (Appendix 1.5).

From September to November 2019, I made three visits to Newcastle to interview members of academic staff and senior management at Northumbria University, shadow academic staff during their workday, and observe students and graduates of the graphic design department at the University's School of Design. The following sub-sections specific research activities carried out on in Colombo and Newcastle to collect empirical data.

3.5.1 Interviews

In-depth interviews were an obvious choice while planning research activities with staff members as it allows participants to share common sense perceptions, explanations, and understandings of a lived experience (Gubrium and Holstein 2001, p.106). They aim to explore what is hidden from ordinary view to penetrate a more reflective knowledge about the nature of an experience (ibid.). Given the limitations of time available to meet with participants at the field sites, I narrowed my pool of staff respondents to include those who teach or have taught in the graphic design department at both institutes and the design foundation programme in AOD. I also spoke with academic administrators and members of the senior management team. The interviews were conducted in various spaces; the intention was to find a place that was convenient for the participant and where they could speak candidly and ideally, without interruption. For example, some interviews were conducted on campus, some at participant's homes after work, while others preferred meeting at cafes during the workday when they had time to spare.

Most interviews lasted over an hour, with some discussions extending over two hours. All interviews were digitally recorded, and the audio files were later transcribed to use for data analysis. Borrowing from institutional ethnography (DeVault and McCoy, 2001), my role as the researcher was to explore lines of inquiry within an institutional partnership to make visible points of connection and translocal social relations or relations of ruling discussed previously. The interviews helped gather narratives and anecdotal evidence of institutional relations developed through "the concerted activities of people" and "chains of actions" mediated through conversations, email, and institutional documents used to coordinate a transnational partnership (ibid., p. 754).



Today I was okay-ing more gigabytes of capacity to our Kandy campus and I was laughing with someone about it because they thought forty GB a month was going to do it because there are only six students. They do not know students who managed to tear that down, just six of them, in less than four days. They are voracious for an outside world and they dig into it in that way.

But, in a lot of ways, the digital world is where it starts and finishes. After that, it is case by case. I know lots of kids at the school who have never physically been off this island. I've been on study tours and there will always be five people who've never been on an aeroplane. Everything they know comes from the internet which, I guess, good and bad.

Without it, our research tasks would be impossible because our library is quite small. It would be impossible for us to build a true university library in the classic sense, but we have access to enough information because it's available.

30:20

PB: So, having access to the internet makes AOD international?

Not just access to it, an enormous portion of our classes are taught through it. The amount of YouTube going on when I walk around the school on big classroom screens is quite high. We use access to that international information stream combined with a sometimes-unwelcome foreign context for the projects we are assigned. Which also internationalises us a bit. **For example, the interior design programme is ninety per cent female and sixty per cent Islamic and NU keeps giving out projects about designing bars. It's not un-interesting to broaden your horizons. I say come on ladies, you just have to stick your head inside and look. You don't have to actually stand inside. I've had that conversation for forty-five minutes. It's not haram to stick your head in. That's the gist of it but without that, they would have never considered looking at or standing near an edifice like that.**

It gets them to think about buildings that people might not use, and about the way in which projects are conceived in other countries. That's interesting and international.

Figure 5 Transcription extract, interview with Cole, February 2019.

The open-ended questions allowed for reflexive discussions to understand the translocal practices and contextual specificities involved in facilitating TNE. I often asked for further elaborations and detailed examples to better understand their lived experiences of institutional relations and practices. For instance, while discussing what makes AOD international with a staff member at AOD, he spoke of the important role of the internet and communication technologies in facilitating the curriculum. Further questioning led to an anecdote of students who practice Islam being assigned projects to design bars researching spaces they are not comfortable entering physically, online (Figure 5). These narrative accounts that are used in the following chapters verbally illustrate how TNE practitioners use their agency to carry out activities that challenge official frameworks to facilitate cross-border education systems.

3.5.2 Focus Groups

As a qualitative research method, focus groups are group interviews, but unlike a traditional interview, it does not involve an alternation between the researcher's questions and the participant's responses (Morgan 1997, p. 2). Instead, there is a reliance on group interaction in response to topics supplied by the researcher who acts as a moderator. The researcher's interest provides the focus, but the data is derived from the group interaction (ibid., p. 6). Focus groups were an appropriate method to engage AOD alumni in reflective discussions as it is a systematic and disciplined approach that emphasises respect for others' views, allowing the researcher to get in touch with a participants' perceptions, attitudes, and opinions which provides a richness of data (Krueger, 1994). Additionally, the value of this method in terms of gathering data lies in the fact that the explicit use of group interaction produces data and insights which would be less accessible in the absence of group interaction (Morgan 1997, p. 2).

A focus group should characterise homogeneity but with sufficient variation among participants to allow for contrasting opinions (Krueger 1994, p.77). The criteria for commonality were that the participants be graduates with the same degree and experience working in the local industry. The logistical benefit of conducting focus groups with alumni lay in the fact that it enabled me to reach out to a more sizeable number of individuals than was feasible with individual interviews in the given period. I had individually invited former students who had graduated with a Northumbria University BA degree in Graphic Design. An initial invitation sent via email to thirty graduates who had received a BA degree between 2010 – 2017 led to seventeen potential participants. The final groups of six participants each were selected based on an online poll where interested participants could state their availability without knowing who else would attend. This process allowed for random selection, which was helpful since randomisation can assist in a non-biased cross-section by giving everyone in the pool an equal chance to participate (ibid., p. 81).

Some of the participants worked together in a professional capacity but not full time. Not including colleagues was essential to ensure that workplace hierarchies would not affect participants' ability to speak freely or oppose someone's perspective. When dealing with complex topics and knowledgeable participants who, in this instance, also had significant lived experience, the ideal size of a focus group should be between six and nine participants (Krueger 1994, p.78). In the end, the first group included six participants, and the second group had four as there were two last-minute

cancellations. Facilitating the group discussion was an organic process as the small size of each group allowed for sustained discussion on the various lines of inquiry.

As the moderator, I was mindful to practice reflexivity while facilitating the group discussions to ensure that I did not influence the group's interactions and that individual participants did not influence or take over the discussion. Group discussions can encourage group conformity or polarisation on the topics presented; Morgan (1997, p. 40) suggests that in instances where the participants are quite involved in the topic, having a structured approach can help groups comparably discuss the issues. The problem with this can be that a narrow set of questions can lead to limited data. To avoid this, he suggests a funnel approach (ibid., p. 41) where the initial questions are less structured, which allows for free discussion and then move towards more specific questions.

As discussed, the questionnaires provided a structure to the sessions; by relying on the research focus, focus groups can produce concentrated amounts of data on the topic of interest (Morgan 1997, p. 13). However, this can be also considered a weakness since having a structure can make interactions less naturalistic (ibid., p. 14). However, given the limitation on time and the wide range of topics to cover, having an initial structure provided a path forward, but diversions based on the topic of discussion were highly encouraged. In my role as the moderator, I was attempting to persuade my participants to share personal insights on the various topics while also challenging them to explain and elaborate on points made to facilitate critical reflection and follow emergent themes.

To make time for working professionals, both focus group sessions were held on weekends and lasted just over three hours, resulting in recorded audio files, which were transcribed, sketches, and visual artefacts. The first session was held in a private meeting room in a cafe in Colombo. The second was held on campus in the AOD graphics studio. At the time, the shelves and walls of the studio were full of former students' work and graffiti (Figure 6), which led to participants having side conversations that were quite nostalgic. Since alumni knew each other and had shared experiences of being recipients of a transnational design education, they were comfortable voicing their opinions in a group setting and disagreeing with one another. Their contradicting views on the value of a design portfolio are presented in Chapter 6, for example.

Figure 6 Former student work in the AOD Graphics Studio 1, February 2019, Colombo.

3.5.3 Being There

As a fundamental research skill, observation requires attentive looking and systematic recording of phenomena: people, artefacts, environments, events, behaviours, and interactions (Martin and Hanington 2012, p. 120). One may have a guiding set of questions, but observation is done with an open mind and departures from the plan are allowed in response to unexpected events. Systematic observation and recording are critical to ethnographic research, documenting what is physically evident in the environment and the behaviours, interactions, language, motivations, and perceptions of the participants (ibid., p. 124). In participant observation, the researcher becomes part of the group being investigated (Collins 2010, p. 133). To become a part of AOD for four weeks, I adopted the regular workday of the full-time academic staff and arrived on campus every morning at eight and left just after five in the evening. When I was not conducting student workshops or interviewing former colleagues, I would sit in one of the staff hot-desking spaces, a cramped glass-paned bubble across the graphics studios with six desks (Figure 7), or the library when I needed a quieter space to work.

Figure 7 Staff hot desking space, AOD, February 2019, Colombo.

An organisation is like a tribe with its own customs and practices. Contrary to the presumed narrative of a field researcher, that is, a person who "arrives at the place of study without much introduction and knowing few people" (Van Maanen 2011, p. 1), during my time in Colombo, I was returning to my old stomping ground where I had built close personal relationships with many members of staff. In an explicit role, an individual quite clearly takes the role of a researcher and can move around, observe, interview, and participate in the work as appropriate. I wanted to ensure that all members of staff were aware that I was back at AOD for research and not as an employee. My visits to Northumbria University were different; although I was well acquainted with a few of the staff, there were no ethical issues of being in an overly familiar space. Unlike at AOD where I was based for several weeks, I made flying visits to Newcastle to conduct interviews, shadow academic staff, and attend a symposium on professional practice exclusively for students in the graphic design department.

By situating myself in these spaces for varying amounts of time, I could observe my participants. These observations helped supplement and compare data gathered across various participatory research methods. Visiting AOD and Northumbria University provided opportunities to observe activities, processes, and interactions between individuals in the institutional space, which are key for participant observation (Bell, 1993). I was focusing on the interactional style of academic staff with students and interactions between members of staff. Being based in the staff hot-desking space in AOD and attending staff meetings also provided insights into work knowledge in an academic institution; by that, I mean what members of staff spoke about when they spoke of work. As I was playing an active role in facilitating most of my research activities, most of my field notes took the form of 'jottings' (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011, p.52). These were ongoing analytical thoughts to provide textual links to my time on the field.

As demonstrated in the previous images, for a visual record, I took photographs of the field sites to help visually contextualise the space. Photography is a visual system of representation to look at the relationship between what is physically depicted and what it represents (Collins 2010, p. 141). Photographs are not objective and do not present an objective point of view of the person taking them, instead, they depict a way to see or understand an object or context; the photographers' intentions must be ascertained (ibid.). My objective in creating a visual record was to provide contextual references and background for the two field sites: classrooms and studio spaces and office space for staff. I refrained from taking images of objects or ephemera which could be linked to an individual's identity in any way.

Since this research was conducted in institutional spaces, the ethnographic activities were "committed to discovering beyond any one individual's experience including the researcher's own and putting into words supplemented in some instances by diagrams or maps what she or he discovers about how people's activities are coordinated" (Smith 2006, p. 10). The following section describes design exercises or activities that different stakeholder groups engaged in to visualise power dynamics or ruling relations that coordinate the everyday work within transnational partnerships and globalised education systems.

3.6 Research *through* Design

While this project employed standard ethnographic methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation, the field research also involved participatory design workshops which comprised of activities designed to be open-ended and experimental in nature. Ethnographic and design methods are complementary in that they are both participatory, process-oriented, and people-centric (Murphy and Marcus, 2013). Using a variety of data collection methods allows one to 'see' the responses from different perspectives and layering various types of data works to the inherent strengths and cancels out the weaknesses of the selected methods (Collins 2010, p.49). Asking the various stakeholders to engage in ethnographic and participatory research methods was to produce a variety of data which could then be compared and triangulated during the analysis stage. The participatory methods used in this project included workshops with AOD students, a prototyping exercise with AOD students and alumni, and a mapping exercise with participants across both field sites.

3.6.1 Design Workshops

Interacting with students at AOD had the strictest time limitation as I could only engage with them on campus during class hours. For the allotted time, I designed workshops as they are a form of participatory design consolidating creative co-design methods into organised sessions for several participants to work together (Martin and Hanington 2012, p. 62). As a method, they are an engaging way to gain the trust and creative input of stakeholders through activity-based research (ibid.). The workshops with students had several overlaps with the focus group sessions in terms of content and structure. However, the actual facilitation varied as the time available was different, as was the students' abilities to engage and contribute to an experimental workshop.

The three workshops with first, second, and third-year graphic design students were scheduled into two-and-a-half-hour teaching blocks in their academic timetable (Appendix 1.5). Thirty-four students participated; the overall response was positive regarding their willingness to engage and contribute towards group discussions and workshop activities. The students were divided into groups of three or four, and the first section involved a question and answer session. I used the questionnaires to have a consistent, structured approach across the various participant groups (Appendix 1.4) and used a projector to propose questions based on contextual references to these groups rather than individual students (Figure 8). Each group would discuss the topics for a few minutes and have one person from the group present key points to the rest. The tone of the workshops was kept informal to get candid responses from the participants. For example, upon asking first-year students what made AOD distinctly Sri Lankan, one of the students responded that AOD is often called the 'Academy of Drama' instead of Design, leading to laughter and agreement from the group. When I inquired where this title comes from, they spoke of a tendency of people in Colombo to gossip and how AOD students help fuel this habit, mainly through their interpersonal relationships and resulting drama.

The workshop with the Design Foundation students, on the other hand, was spread over three days (Appendix 1.5) and was designed to introduce design research methods to the group, such as making mind maps and prototypes using the framework of a

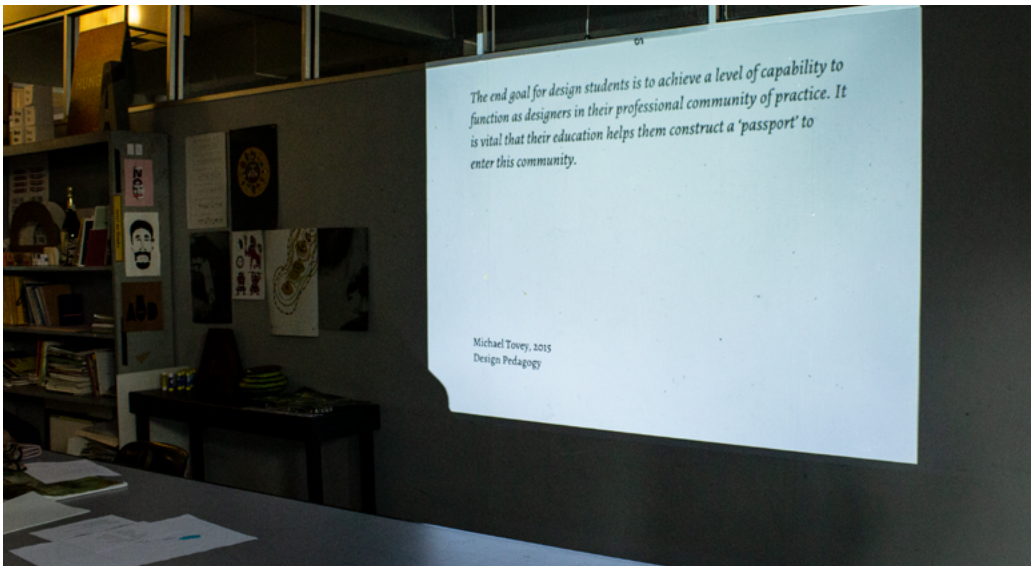


Figure 8 AOD student workshop set-up. February 2010, Colombo.

design sprint (gv.com, 2019). Unlike the students in the graphic design department, the twenty-two design foundation students had only been part of AOD for a few weeks when I facilitated the workshop. The group was entirely new to the practicalities and ethos of a design institute, which led to certain challenges. For instance, it was their first time working in groups for some students and doing oral presentations of their work in English. There were instances where students would hide their faces during presentations or group discussion with their designed artefacts in embarrassment.

As I had more time with these students, I modified the structure so they could write their thoughts on post-it notes during reflections rather than speak to the group. While I took audio recordings of student presentations and discussions with the graphic design students, I refrained from doing the same with the foundation students as I suspected having recorders would make them even more nervous about speaking. However, the workshop outcomes showed a commitment to completing the tasks, and their designed artefacts have been included in the final data sets.

3.6.2 Prototyping a Passport to Practice Design

Ethnography helped inform the participatory design methods by grounding them in theoretical considerations; specifically, the notion of *a passport to practice* (Tovey 2015) to imagine a system to gain access to professional design practice, and *ruling relations* (Smith, 2006) to visualise social relations and perceptions of power in educational settings (Section 3.6.3). According to Tovey (2015), a British design academic, most design students want to gain the skills to achieve a capability to function as professional designers and enter their respective communities of design practice. Learning within a community of practice is an experience of identity formation, a process of becoming, in this case, a certain kind of creative and critically minded design practitioner. He argues that a design education provides students with a 'passport to practice' (ibid., p.37) to enter these communities. The notion of a passport to practice design was central to answer the secondary research question— *how does a TNE experience in design education provide access to communities of design practice?*

As a part of the focus group sessions with alumni and workshops with students, I

asked participants to explore the concept of a passport to design practice to examine the value of a Western design education in South Asia and its application in a different cultural context. The exercise was preluded by a discussion on topics such as the value of a design portfolio, dream jobs, and ways to access local and global professional communities of design practice. The brief presented to the participants was to conceptualise and prototype a passport to design practice (Figure 9).

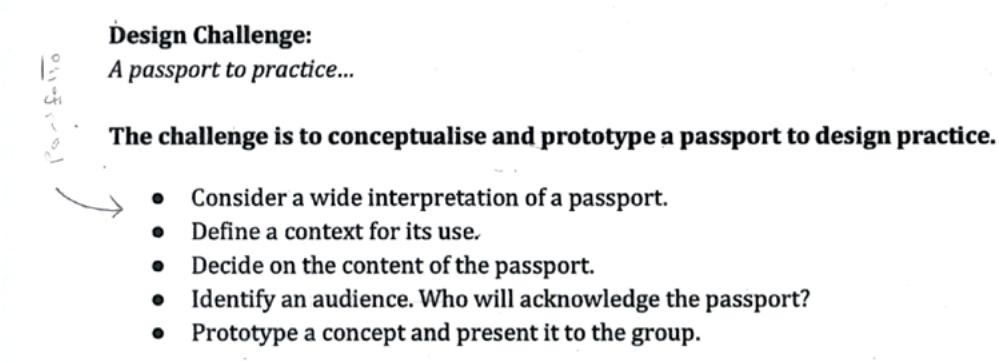


Figure 9 Passport to Practice activity prompt.

We examined the dictionary description of passports as a travel document that declares national identity and the metaphoric definition of passports as an object that ensures admission to something. The intention of the prompts was to design an activity that would catalyse discussions on the local community of design practice in Colombo and the professional aspirations of the participants rather than design and suggest tangible solutions for a passport to practice. The insights derived from this activity are shared in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

3.6.3 Mapping Power Relations

The other participatory activity designed for this research was a mapping exercise titled the Perception of Power which asked every stakeholder who participated in the field research to visualise institutional power structures. This exercise done as a part of interviews, focus groups, and design workshops explored participants' perceptions of institutional hierarchies by mapping where stakeholders see themselves and others placed within the transnational partnership and institutional setting. This research activity was designed in response to AOD's 2018 organisational structure (Figure 10). Seeing the linear connections of the hierarchical network made me question the legitimacy of such structures in depicting power relations and whether institutional hierarchies and their suggested workflows reflect everyday work practices. Meirelles (2006) suggests that there is much to be learned by studying relational structures that organise data where relationships are key to the system being visualised. The patterns of connections between nodes in a network of systems can reveal complex social interdependencies (ibid.).

Networks are collections of nodes and links with a particular structure or topology (Meirelles 2006, p. 49). In AOD's organisational structure, the nodes describe institutional roles attached to individuals who belong to the organisation with directed links showing hierarchical positions. The founder of AOD and Design Corp is a solitary node at the top, which links to additional roles below. To reveal perceptions of the actual power-relations between stakeholders, I decided to create

a blank relational map using a radial layout or community structure where "nodes are organised around a central community" (ibid., p. 63), the central community being the AOD-Northumbria partnership. The map (Figure 11), in the simplest terms, was a diagram with the AOD and Northumbria partnership represented at the core surrounded by radial lines to visually and spatially establish the influence of a stakeholder depending on the amount of space between their position (depicted by the placement of a temporary paper tab) and the core. Participants were asked to order a list of identified stakeholders directly involved in AOD's transnational academic partnership and place those with more power to influence change towards the core and those with less influence towards the outer edges (Figure 12).

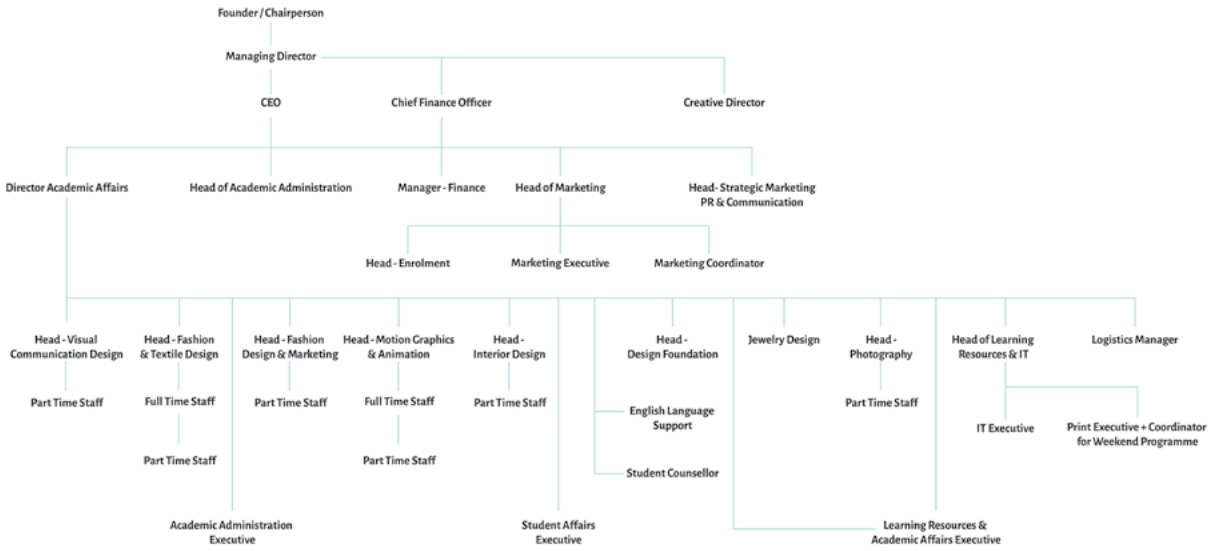


Figure 10 Select section of AOD's organisational chart, August 2018.

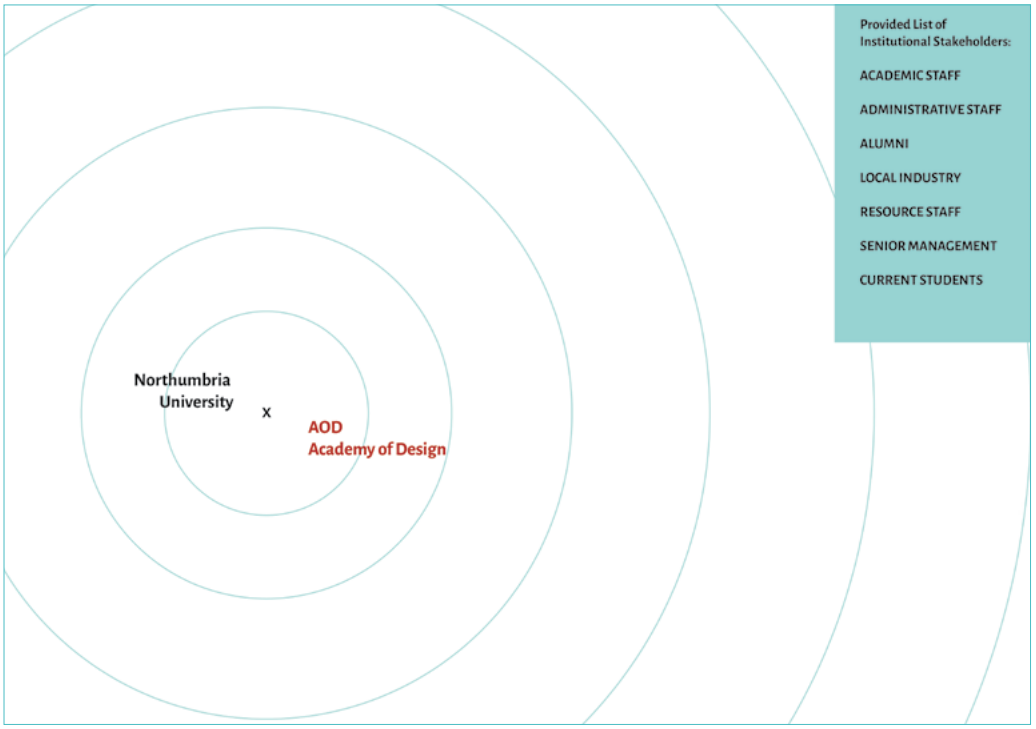


Figure 11 The Perception of Power, diagram of a participatory mapping tool, 2019

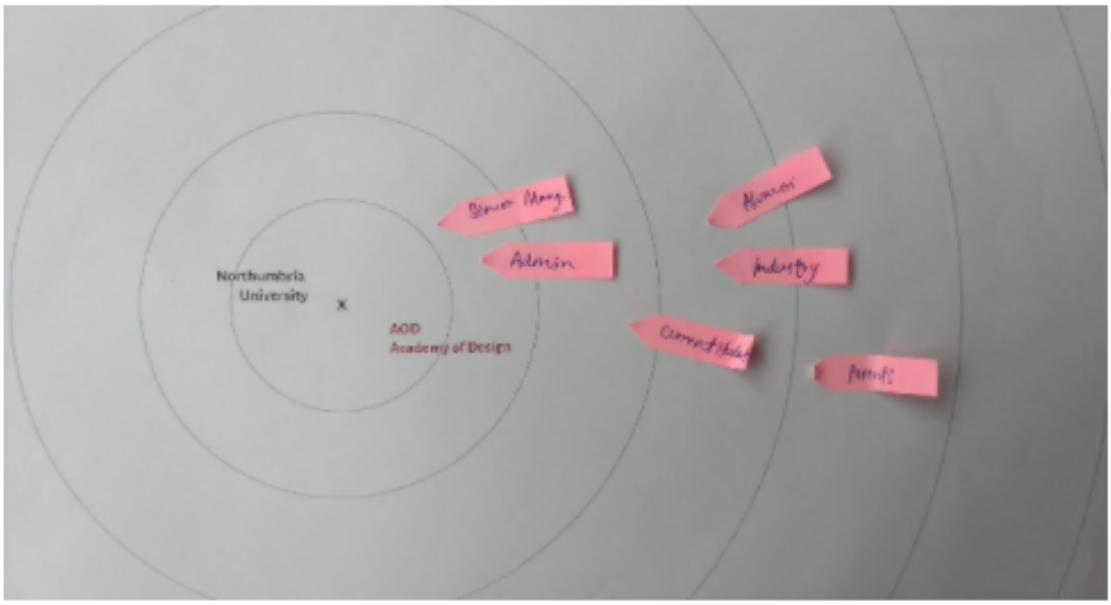
Figure 12 Participants from the first focus group mapping their perception of power, Colombo, 2019.

Power dynamics can be an uncomfortable topic to discuss in an institutional setting; this exercise was designed in the spirit of play, to make the topic approachable and allow me, the researcher, to gain new insights about what actions influence power and agency in a transnational academic setting. The initial list of stakeholders provided was: senior management; academic staff; administrative staff; current students; alumni; the local industry; and resource staff. Participants were also encouraged to add stakeholder groups not included in the list provided, which helped identify gaps. By asking participants to *plot* relationships of power in their institution, I was asking them to reflect on their lived experience. This activity was done individually by interview participants and in groups by those who participated in the focus groups and design workshops. Participants' identified the following groups as additional stakeholders with the power to influence institutional change: parents of students who study at private academic institutions; the finance team at AOD; the marketing team at AOD; and on one occasion friends and acquaintances of students.

By asking participants to visualise their perception of the order of power amongst stakeholders, I was actively documenting how that order was put together and the discussion surrounding the various opinions by recording their conversations. The use of temporary tabs facilitated a spontaneous decision-making process, allowing participants, who themselves were stakeholders, to change the order based on discussion. The completed maps were not the only data generated; the exercise was designed to spark reflection or debate (Figure 13). The maps created offer a visual reference to participants' reflective reasoning behind individual or group decisions.

By combining numerous participants, theories, and methods, the field study aimed to confront the tensions around TNE to lead to unexpected outcomes. In this way, I attempted to overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases of single-method, single-observer and single-theory studies. The multiple empirical data sets gathered during this project are presented in the following flow chart, which also provides an overview of the fieldwork.

10. The Perception of Power



04:30

Senuri: Academic staff, it's what they decide that the students do, right?

Roshan: What if the students boycott them?

Kalpani: Students will be at the next level.

Senuri: Do you think the industry also...

Roshan: It was just graphics. (Everyone laughs)

Gayathri: During our final year, we had a bunch of issues, but we had to just go with what the administrative staff said we had to do.

PB: What were some of the things you tried?

This was about our final exhibition. The layout and the budget for it. There was a problem with our contract, and we pointed it out during meetings and stuff.

Kalpani: So, students are placed after academic staff.

06:12

Senuri: Where would industry come in?

Kalpani: Put them after students.

Gayathri: I feel the industry and alumni are at the same level.

Roshan: yeah.

Kalpani: yeah, we are part of the industry.

Senuri: Resource staff... they go far away. But don't you think Industry also influences a little bit?

Roshan: It does. But it doesn't really change what they (AOD) do.

Figure 13 Transcript extract of group deliberation while mapping their perception of power. Focus group, Colombo, 2019.

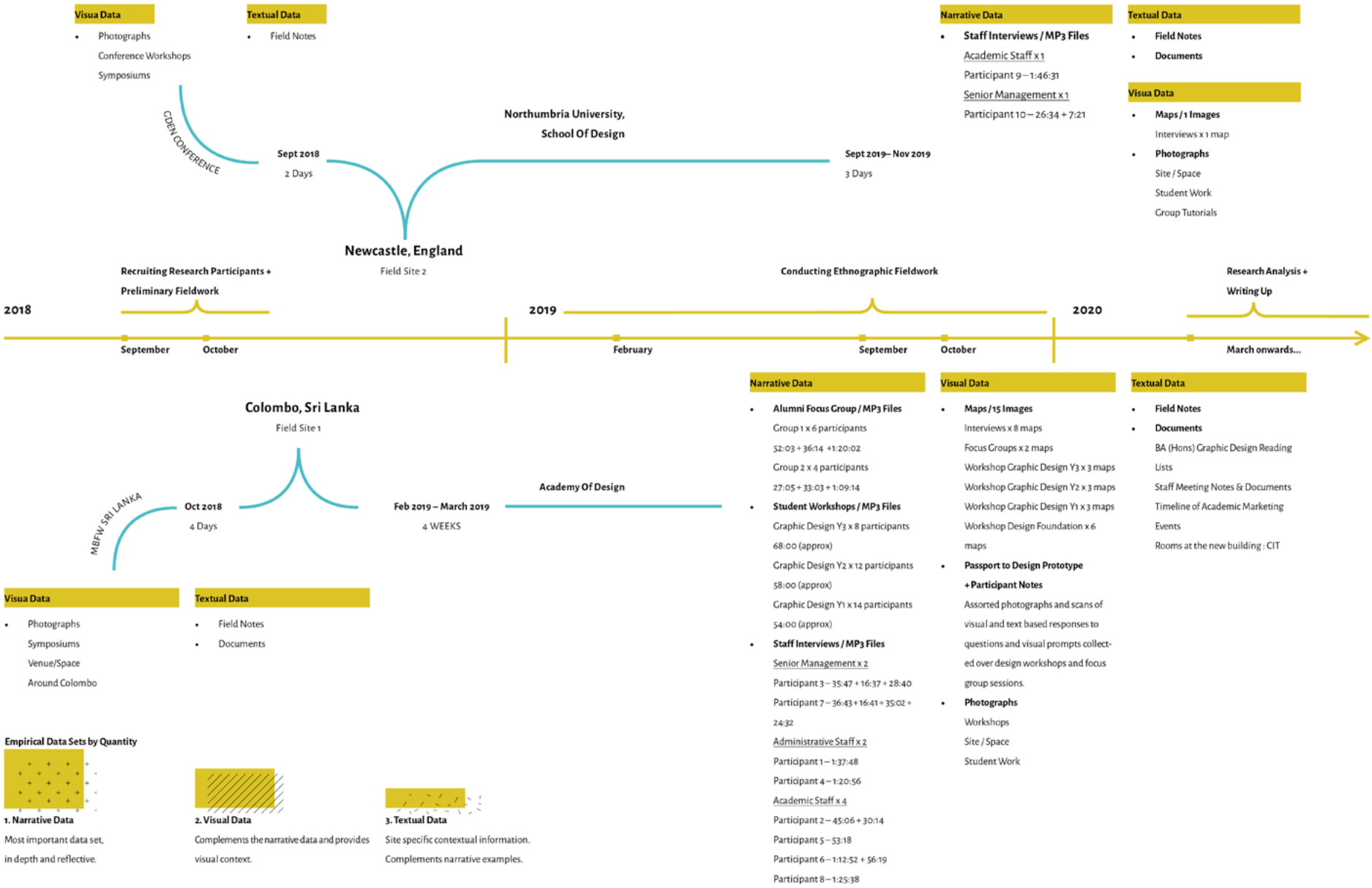


Figure 14 Empirical Data Chart, a compilation of data collected on the field, 2020.

3.7 Narrative Data Analysis: A Revision of Empirical Qualitative Data

There is increasing recognition of the importance and usefulness of narrative analysis as an element of ethnography since narratives are one of the fundamental ways in which "humans organise their understanding of the world" (Cortazzi 2001, p. 384). Most social science and human disciplines have recently turned to narrative analysis for the human involvement in reporting and evaluating experience (ibid.). Accounts of crises, epiphanic moments, or professional encounters do not merely report events but give a teller's perspective on their meaning, relevance and importance (ibid., p. 384).

Ethnography is often constructed as a narrative account of discovery and interpretation – the journey from outsider to insider – using story conventions to persuade readers effectively (Cortazzi, 2001). By overlapping voices from the field with independent accounts of social organisation, ethnographic accounts reveal the patterns of social life that are locally experienced (Gubrium and Holstein, 1999). For example, the field work gathered accounts of positive and negative social interactions of transnational collaboration which are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. There is a considerable overlap between narrative and ethnography (ibid.), which is exemplified in the data gathered. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to take the position of a co-author in relaying narratives by interpreting participants' accounts.

At its most abstract, narratives refer to structures of knowledge and storied ways of knowing (Cortazzi, 2001). The narratives gathered during the field research include anecdotes and stories of personal and professional experiences, recounts of past events, and stories reflecting professional beliefs shared orally by participants and then transcribed into text. My research participants were not merely informants but people offering reflective critiques; adopting a para-ethnographic approach meant my analysis followed their lead.

According to Cortazzi (2001), reasons for doing narrative analysis as part of ethnography are: narratives share the meaning of experience and wider relevant contexts; its concerned with voice or giving importance to sharing the meaning of the experience of less-represented groups; publicising human qualities to reveal crucial, but generally unappreciated, personal and professional qualities involved in many occupations and professions through an insider's view; and finally, to see and present research as a story. Every narrative is an individual's version or view of what happened, making narrative analysis useful in the systematic interpretations of participants' responses to the lines of inquiry and interpretations of institutional actions and events. By collecting and analysing several narratives from one or more participants, it becomes possible to "distil the tellers' perspectives on the events recounted or on particular themes or processes" (Cortazzi 2001, p. 385). Narrative analysis helped mediate the social reality of the AOD-Northumbria University partnership and is used as a research tool to complement other ethnographic research strategies adopted for the field research such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation.

Most importantly, narrative analysis aids the representation of voice (Cortazzi, 2001), that is, the sharing of particular groups' experience, so that others may know life as they know it. In an institutional context such as AOD, a TNE host institute,

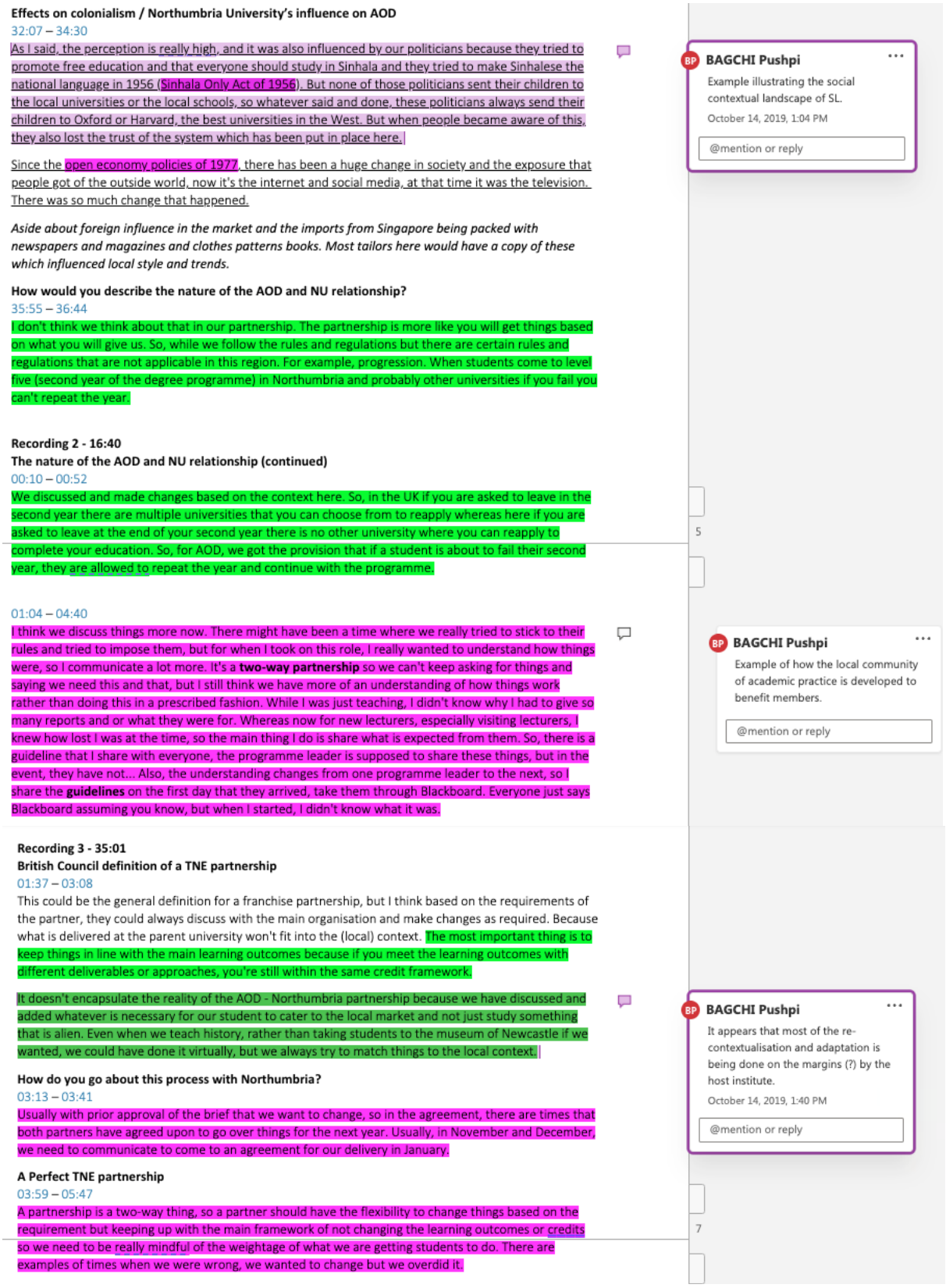
"paying attention to voice gives importance to sharing the meaning of experiences of less-heard groups with other colleagues, or with decision-makers and the public at large" (ibid., p. 386). This method of analysis elevates human qualities such as empathy and agency, which are crucial, but generally unappreciated professional qualities involved in many occupations, such as the facilitation of TNE. Essentially, narrative analysis is a useful method of analysis to portray an insider's view of what a particular job, or franchise partnership, is 'really' like (ibid.).

Various sections in this chapter have discussed the integrity of the field research (Section 3.3) and my positionality as the author (Section 3.2) by outlining the methods taken to clarify ethical concerns and establish rigour in the research process. The literature on narrative analysis informed the revision of the ethnographic data by considering the context of each case and the different experiences of each respondent in the presentation and reformulation of accounts presented. Qualitative thematic analysis tries to determine participants' lives through what they say and aims to ground interpretation in the participants' perspectives, rather than the researcher or analysts' perspectives (Silverman, 2011). The data is then presented as accounts of social phenomenon and practices substantiated by illustrative quotations from the various participatory activities. The following sections detail the data analysis process of moving from textual transcription to drawing thematic insights to present new knowledge gathered on the value of transnational design education.

3.7.1 Transcription to Thematic Network Analysis

The process of data analysis started with the incorporation of suggestions by Bazeley (2013, p.101) and Silverman (2011, p.58): gaining familiarity with the scope and content of each data source (Figure 15); building a contextualised understanding of the participants responses and themes being investigated and the connections between them; focusing on sequences (of conversation, written materials, and interactions); avoiding making early hypotheses or looking for "telling" examples; and developing a framework for further analysis. Data gathered from the semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and student workshops in the form of audio recordings and transcriptions, titled narrative data (Figure 14), is the most critical empirical data set for this research as verbal discussion allowed for the articulation of multiple perspectives on, and meanings of activities, definitions, and concepts. Creating transcriptions in the form of time-stamped digital journals (Appendix 3) allowed me to gain familiarity with the content as well as identify themes and sequences.

Transcription, in this case, was not a technical process of textually transcribing every word uttered by the participant as "there is no such thing as a natural mechanism for the representation of speech" (Atkinson 2004, p.390). I personally transcribed time-stamped sections of interviews and focus group discussions to make the recorded speech readable and the participants' perspectives clear. The links to these transcriptions documents which include my notes made for analysis are available in Appendix 3. This data required the use of textual conventions and representations to convey the content to the reader, and these representations of speech are matters of interpretation implicated in the writer's preoccupations (ibid.). My preoccupations were of readability and the responsibility of representing the speaker in the most



Highlight Key: Illustrative example. Narrative which helps formulate a response to secondary research question 2.

Figure 15 Data analysis.

accurate way possible. All the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in English, but the specificities of vocabulary and syntax used in certain instances have been edited in the transcription process.

This editorial process involved in selecting accounts of *social phenomenon* was to ensure that the representation of speech do not divulge individual characteristics of any participant to maintain anonymity as well as aid readability. For example, most participants, whether they were in Sri Lanka or England, overused the words so, like, okay, um, as fillers. In a five-minute transcribed section from the first focus group in February 2019, the word *so* is used thirteen times by different participants. An unedited excerpt from the same discussion helps illustrate this–

> So, we were all like, shit, what do we do? But, also at the same time, it was us figuring out, okay, then we need to do this, this, and this. So, we really grew up from where we were after studying for ten years in our local system to just these three years, it was like, an immense amount of growth by the end of three years. So, that was definitely the best part for me.

I have taken the editorial liberty in such cases to remove unnecessary words and shorten excerpts when used as direct quotes. A crucial point to note is that "the purpose of most qualitative interviewing is to derive interpretations, not facts or laws" (Gubrium and Holstein 2001, p.83). The process of participant observation helped provide contextual reference to the interpretations and experiences shared by participants during interviews and group discussion. The aim of the research activities, specifically the interviews, focus groups, and workshop discussions, was to understand the respondents' life experiences; it is essential to accept that a single respondent can take up multiple perspectives within a single interview (ibid.). Their anecdotes and reflections by themselves are "spoken narratives" (Atkinson 2004, p.389), in this case of their life experiences and perceptions in and of a transnational design education partnership. For this reason, the audio transcriptions are titled *narrative data*.

As stated by Clifford (2004, p.384), "ethnography is actively situated between powerful systems of meaning" as it involves a process of decoding and recoding written and verbal text by the researcher. My experience working in this transnational partnership colours the interpretation of participants' accounts. The process of making meaning from the verbal discourse of participants through the form of a written text also takes on literary qualities since, in addition to being factual, the text must be composed to present the analysis or description effectively (ibid.). Clifford called these constructed or partial truths, making ethnography a "hybrid textual activity" (2004, p.388).

Each interview, focus group, and workshop transcription was broken into sections of discussion points relating to one or more research question. These sections were further annotated to link to other transcriptions, field notes, personal reflections, and visual data gathered to build the empirical insights in response to the research questions. Figure 15, a screenshot of a transcription of an AOD staff member's interview, illustrates this process. In addition to including thematic headings and the individual questions being responded to in various sections, I inserted time stamps in reference to the audio recordings to help navigate these documents.

Although individually transcribing several hours of recordings was a very long and laborious process, I became intimately familiar with the content, which helped draw connections across various transcription documents. This helped make connections across various participants' responses. I then used a code of colours to highlight sections of text to make connections across the different documents. For example, fuchsia was used for illustrative examples and green was used for sections I felt would help identify themes in response to the research question—how do TNE systems acknowledge contextual specificities? Each document also included my notes and comments in the sidebar.

The process of sectioning and annotating transcriptions facilitated the textual mapping process of building thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Martin and Hanington, 2012). Creating a thematic network is a step-by-step process which helps identify, organise, and connect the most common themes in rich, qualitative data (Martin and Hanington 2012, p.178). As an analytical tool, it aids in unearthing the salient themes in a text and facilitates the structuring and depiction of themes, sharing key features of interpretive analysis (Attride-Stirling 2001, p.388).

A thematic network consists of basic; organising; and global themes (Figure 16). The basic themes represent the most recurring and lowest order premise, which are then clustered to form organising themes. The objective of organising themes is to summarise more abstract principles to form an argument or position on a subject. The super-ordinate theme that emerges is called the global theme, which encapsulates the principal metaphor or message in the text as a whole (ibid.). The value of using this analytical tool lies in creating a visual representation which makes explicit the steps taken in going from text to interpretation; removing hierarchy and providing fluidity to the themes which emphasise their inter-connectivity (Attride-Stirling 2001, p.389). The thematic networks derived from the narrative data analysis are presented in Chapter 7 of this thesis to visually summarise the empirical insights developed in the previous Chapters 4, 5, and 6 and provide a reference for the new knowledge defined in the thesis.

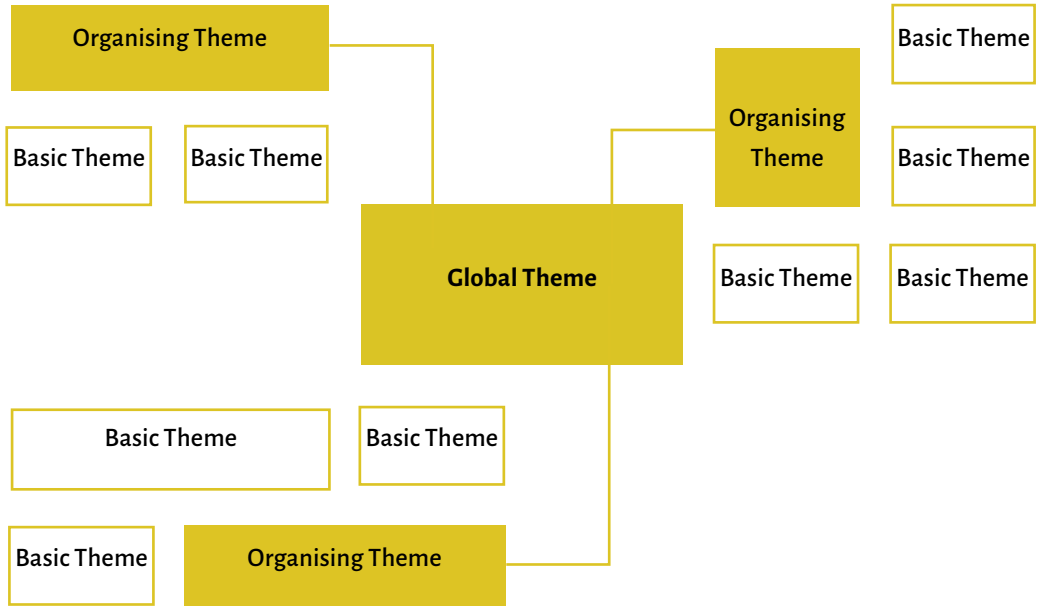


Figure 16 Structure of a thematic network, based on Attride-Stirling, 2001, p.388.

3.7.2 Selecting Data Sets

As discussed in the previous sections, the primary data set used in the analysis process to gather insights was the narrative data gathered from the interviews, focus groups, and student workshops. The narrative data was further supplemented by textual data in the form of institutional documents and observational field notes and visual data gathered in the form of documentary photographs and designed artefacts created by research participants. The artefacts include prototypes visualising for a passport to design practice and maps plotting institutional power hierarchies.

The intention of collecting qualitative data during the field research across both sites using multiple research methods was to cast a wide net in a specific place in a limited amount of time to capitalise on the available resources, leading to large quantities of empirical data. In the process of analysing and reducing the mountain of data gathered to manageable data sets, some subsets were left unused while developing the theoretical arguments in the following chapters. Notably, the institutional power maps created by various stakeholders was an insightful exercise in revealing differences in stakeholders' perception compared to the official account of institutional hierarchy as depicted in the organisational structure. While this subset of the visual data is not used in the following chapters analysing the empirical data gathered, the exercise was critical in revealing gaps in the research design in terms of identifying relevant stakeholders who influence transnational institutes such as AOD. These limitations are discussed in Chapter 7, along with the value of developing such interactive research tools for ethnographic research.

3.8 Engaging in Participatory Research

This chapter detailed the qualitative, para-ethnographic research approach adopted for this project and the specific research methods employed to answer the research questions. The fieldwork was inclusive and collaborative by inviting various stakeholders seeking and facilitating transnational design education services through the AOD-Northumbria University franchise partnership. The research design considered a variety of literature on ethnography and participatory methods to successfully generate collaborative research with former colleagues and students across two field sites in different countries. I used multiple ethnographic methods such as interviews, focus groups, participant observation alongside design methods to gather rich, qualitative data which could be layered and compared to offer persuasive insights. The data collected includes background details of the two field sites through photographs and field notes to provide contextual references that are crucial to analysing the narrative data generated.

Engaging in participatory systems encourages us to ask not what is wrong with our current institutions and how to reform them, but rather the extent of our collective capabilities and knowledge and how we can harness the two (Cottam, 2010). In the following chapters, the data generated using these methods help understand TNE as an educational system where the everyday practice of teaching and learning do not align with the established institutional structures for facilitators or the promise of attaining cultural capital for consumers. Narrative analysis helps review the ethnographic data to answer the secondary research questions; how does knowledge really flow in TNE systems? How do TNE systems acknowledge contextual specificities?

How does a TNE experience provide access to communities of design practice?

Analysing and layering the data sets led to persuasive thematic insights by using diverse perspectives and connecting them with relevant theoretical frameworks. Silverman (2011) argues that persuasiveness is strengthened when the investigator's theoretical claims are supported with evidence from informants' accounts, negative cases, and alternative interpretations. Considering Silverman's' argument on strengthening persuasiveness, the following chapters adopt Brewer's suggestions (Brewer, 2004) for establishing the authority and complexity of the narrative data. The narratives used to reveal findings provide sufficient extracts in the text to "allow readers to evaluate the inferences drawn from them and the interpretations made from them" (ibid., p. 407). These extracts are often followed by contradictory perspectives by participants or descriptions of the institutional, social, and cultural details of participants narratives to provide context to the reader.

The overall process of analysis, particularly the textual construction of the ethnographic research, and compilation of participatory outcomes was critically reflective, and used a postcolonial perspective to do justice to the complexity of data generated and the participants' invaluable contributions. By postcolonial perspective I mean, looking at the data generated beyond differences or binary oppositions between sender and host or North and South. Instead, the following chapters focus on the hybrid, frictional, and emergent nature of social identities in TNE host institutes and cultures that are still evolving through translocal practices. This is to acknowledge "the fluidity and historicity of cultures and of cultural relations" and challenge "views of cultures as hermetically sealed, essentialised and static entities" (Tikly and Bond 2013, p. 425).

I conclude with a note on "ethnographic imagination" (Brewer 2004, p. 407), that is, a particular perspective adopted by a reader to consider ethnographic data to have authority. Adopting an ethnographic imagination does not suggest being sympathetic to or making allowances for data which includes subjective narratives and observations, but accepting that ethnographic data such as extracts of recorded conversations, observations, field notes, and co-created artefacts have strength in revealing a social world and that every day, micro events can illustrate broader social processes (ibid.).

Ch. 4 Going With the Flow

AOD sits on one of the busier roads of Colombo city. Officially titled R.A. de Mel Mawatha after a Ceylonese politician, it is colloquially (and colonially) known as Duplication road. In addition to the AOD campus, the six-hundred-meter street is home to the British Council, the German embassy, and other academic institutes such as ANC Education, which offers students the opportunity to study American higher education degrees in Sri Lanka. Restaurants, stores, business and financial enterprises are scattered along the length of Duplication road, making it an educational, commercial, and cultural thoroughfare clogged with vehicular traffic flowing unidirectionally from South to North. I was reminded of this while transcribing audio recordings as participants' speech was often interrupted by the screech of tires and jarring honks. The one-way flow of traffic proved to be an apt parallel when analysing participants' responses to answer the research question– *how does knowledge really flow in TNE systems?*

This chapter is the first of the three *findings* chapters. It defines design as a discipline and course of academic study and, by drawing on the research findings, understand how design knowledge is then packaged as a curriculum to be exported from one academic institute to another. The first section defines design knowledge from a historical perspective and how it is different from other knowledge cultures, such as science. The definitions and interpretations of design as a discipline and specific type of knowledge are from scholars whose research focuses on design-based research methods (Hoadley and Cox 2008), design ability and processes (Cross, 2006 and 2001; Lawson, 2004), and design history and culture (Huppatz, 2015; Julier et al., 2019).

Defining design knowledge provides a theoretical foundation for the empirical insights gathered from the field study on teaching and learning a design curriculum exported from England to Sri Lanka. The narrative data shared in this chapter are by stakeholders involved in the design and delivery of the franchise programme across both field sites, AOD and Northumbria University. The lived experience of the participants helps confirm and challenge concerns raised around perpetuating inequality in the global knowledge industry introduced in Chapter 1 (Section 1.4).

The literature on TNE and narrative data from the field demonstrates that transnational academic franchises are systems with a prescribed format of imbalance since they overlook the exchange of knowledge, culture, and collaboration. Instead, definitions of such programmes and their formats of facilitation specify a hierarchical process of dominance and authority over what must be taught in a host institute to ensure a smooth flow of knowledge. The prescribed format of a franchised design programme does not account for contextual specificities in the facilitation of educational services. In their everyday practice of facilitating the Northumbria University design programme, academic staff in AOD constantly adapt the curricular content to offer a better learning experience to students based in Colombo. Navigating the various examples of curricular adaptation answers the research question— *how do TNE systems acknowledge contextual specificities?*

4.1 Franchising Design Education

Before exploring how knowledge flows in a franchised academic partnership, this section reiterates the transactional aspect of this relationship as it is one of the

main motivations for TNE. Knight (2013) claims that the internationalisation of higher education though initially conceived around partnerships, collaboration, and exchange for mutual benefit, has given way to agreements which account for trade, economic, and political factors. Treaties like GATS by the World Trade Organisation also evidence this. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, there is evident inequality in the flow of capital from the global South to the North in the pursuit of higher education. As discussed in section 1.3.3, an academic franchise involves a primary institution granting authority to another institution to host its educational services for a fee. In the context of Northumbria University and AOD, the partnership is built on this predefined franchise arrangement of design curriculum and Bachelor of Arts degrees flowing from Newcastle to Colombo, and money flowing from Colombo to Newcastle in return (Figure 17).

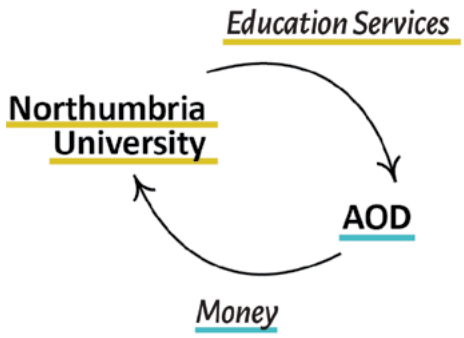


Figure 17 Transactional flow of the prescribed arrangement of a franchise academic partnership, 2019.

The financial scope and economic impact of academic internationalisation, such as TNE, is vast and impossible to define or quantify (Altbach and Knight 2007, p. 293). Additionally, the topic of financing transnational partnerships is an uncomfortable one. It brings to focus the inequality embedded in the privatisation of higher education since only the privileged can afford it. Current students and alumni were aware of this fact. Discussions with participants established that students studying at AOD do not pay as much as international students studying in Newcastle for their local tuition. Some focus group and workshop participants mentioned that getting a British higher education qualification in Sri Lanka at a lower cost than what they would have paid as an international student in England was a motivating factor to join AOD. At the same time, other participants spoke of the high cost of studying at AOD compared to Sri Lankan public universities, which, although free of cost, were almost impossible to get access to because of limited seats and the requirement of exceptional grades.

While discussing the benefits of a foreign degree in Sri Lanka, a participant who graduated in 2010 spoke of how only those who belonged to a "certain lifestyle can afford to join AOD" (Focus group, February 16, 2019). Current students at AOD spoke of being socially dismissed as rich kids who could not get the required grades to qualify for public universities (Figure 18). Comments of being considered "rich kids" echoes previous discussions in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2), where the concept of development or classifying nations as developed or developing helps maintain social hierarchies among "international actors of unequal wealth" based on economic productivity and financial prosperity. Although this research focuses on the flow of

design education services between stakeholders of the two academic institutes and their daily functioning, issues around money and finance discussed in this section need to be acknowledged as the entire premise of TNE is embedded in global trade and economics.

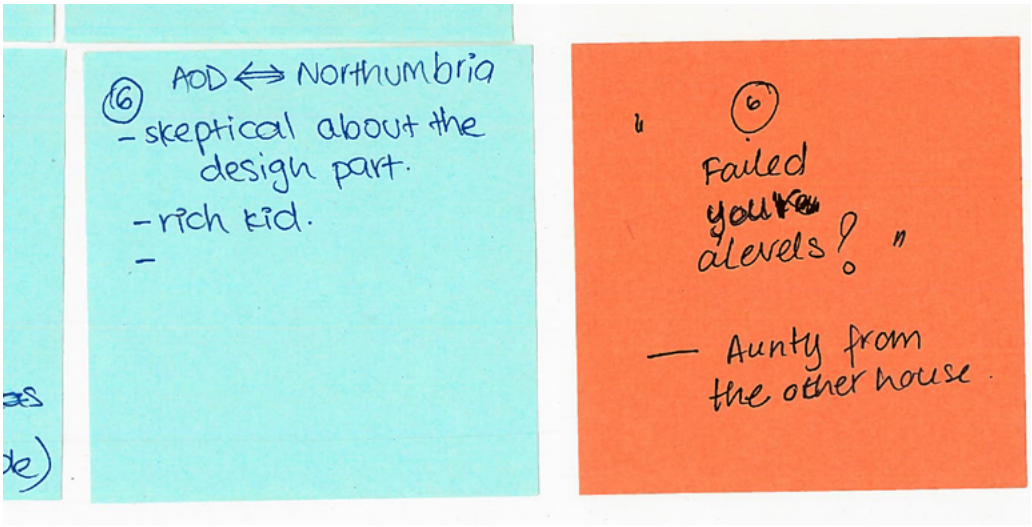


Figure 18 Workshop notes by third-year Graphic Design students in Colombo on the local perception of AOD, February 2019.

4.2 Teaching Design Knowledge

Chapter 2 (section 2.5) discussed how the histories of most disciplines, including design, are shaped by colonial structures of knowledge, emanating from a core to peripheries. In the context of this franchise partnership, the parent institute, Northumbria University, is at the core, sending design knowledge to its franchise partners, such as AOD, which are at the periphery. In the context of teaching design, this project is concerned with "contemporary design" (Escobar 2017, p. 32). That is, design originating in the Industrial Revolution and nineteenth-century modernism when Western Society became pervaded and transformed by "expert knowledges and discourses" and social norms and knowledge generated by communities from within were pushed aside (ibid.). This is not to claim that other origins of design are not of significance or importance. Instead, it is to acknowledge that such topics are beyond the scope of this project which is exploring the export and facilitation of design curriculum from an academic institute in Britain that has historical roots in industrial design and vocational training and a present-day focus on offering design students professional skills and industry experience (Northumbria University, 2021).

The definitions of design introduced in Chapter 1; to imagine possible ways of living and functioning in the world (Julier 2017, p. 2) or devising courses of action to change existing situations into preferred ones (Simon, 2001), portrays design as a future-oriented discipline concerned with how things ought to be. Designers must have the self-confidence to define, redefine, and change a given problem in light of solutions that emerge from their minds and hands (Cross 2006, p 7). We learn to design not by reading a textbook but by doing (Lawson 2004, p. 7), making design knowledge a type of meta-knowledge that leans less towards answers and more towards methods that lead to answers (Hoadley and Cox 2008, p 19). This is because, as practitioners, designers create processes to work with under-specification to deal

with complex phenomena by negotiating general knowledge and the particulars of individual contexts.

In the context of teaching design knowledge, some academics go even further back in time to state that the study and practice of design requires a synthesis of all three types of knowledge defined by the Western philosopher Aristotle (Hoadley and Cox 2008; Manzini 2009). Aristotle distinguished between three types of knowledge or intellectual virtues: *episteme*; *techne*; and *phronesis* (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Turning to more recent interpretations of Aristotle's types of knowledge, Flyvbjerg (2001), states the purpose of *episteme* is to test ideas about the world against empirical experience and corresponds with what is termed as scientific knowledge. Epistemic knowledge is concerned with universal knowledge which remains unchanged over time and is achieved by analytical rationality. *Techne* relates to the art of craft or knowledge gained through the practice of an activity. The objective of techne is to apply technical knowledge and skills according to a "pragmatic and instrumental rationality" (ibid., p. 56). Finally, *phronesis* corresponds to the setting of values and ethics in relation to social and political customs (ibid.).

As a practical virtue, phronesis is concerned with the analysis of values as a point of departure for action. This type of knowledge, according to Aristotle, requires consideration, judgement and experience (Flyvbjerg, 2001). While episteme concerns *know why* and techne denotes practical *know how*, phronesis emphasises ethics and therefore, unlike the others, is not an exact science as various circumstances can be dealt with in multiple and variable ways and is dependent on a person's principles. Using Aristotle's three types of knowledge as a framework for the discipline of design, finding and defining a problem requires phronesis, the iterative process of creation involves techne, and the interpretation and incorporation of data or information requires episteme (Hoadley and Cox 2008).

Phronesis plays a crucial role in the practice of design as it "combines creativity and subjectivity with a dose of reflection" (Manzini 2009, p. 6). The process of reflection aids the designer in justifying their choices (ibid.), and this reflective design making process is dependent on an individual's value system. Design values are "first principles" from which different types of activities are derived (Hoadley and Cox 2008, p. 24). These values act as an educational philosophy which imbibes students with a stance or sensibility rather than design constraints which help achieve desired outcomes (ibid.). Participatory design, a method adopted for this project, for example, values the inclusion of users from the very beginning of a design process to shape the design of products or systems (Chapter 3).

The design curriculum at the Bauhaus, which is the basis for most Western design education today (Huppatz, 2015; Julier et al., 2019), was based on blended learning, that is, integrating theory and practice and combining phronesis, techne, and episteme (Hoadley and Cox 2008, p. 22). The Bauhaus emerged from the spirit of the Deutscher Werkbund, an interdisciplinary association of artists, architects, businessmen which was "carried by designers" to "create a practical, effective connection between commerce, craftsmanship and industry, and the designing artist" (Siebenbrodt and Schöbe 2009, p. 16). Echoing this spirit of education for professional practice at the

intersection of craft and commerce, the School of Design at Northumbria University highlights the programmes focus on being part of a network of "partnerships with cultural and creative organisations" such as Samsung, Phillips, and Unilever, for example, and learning by doing in professional facilities such as workshops and studio spaces (Northumbria University, 2021). Considering the blended, meta nature of design knowledge and practice, the task of design educators to facilitate the learning of design knowledge is a challenge in and of itself.

Cross, a British design theorist, coined the term *designerly ways of knowing* (1982) to formalise design as a coherent discipline of study. Cross describes education as entailing the following aspects: the transmission of knowledge about a phenomenon of study; training in the appropriate methods of enquiry; and an initiation into the belief systems and values of the culture (Cross, 2006). The term culture, in this case, is the established area of study. The two traditional and dominant cultures have been education in the sciences and education in the arts and humanities; education in design, according to Cross, is a relatively new third culture (ibid.).

The aim of design education is to teach students the general knowledge or concepts that the field has established and facilitate the development of an individual, unique way of applying those ideas. Uluoglu (2000, p. 34) describes this as "the teaching of generalities via a personal style when solving specifics". The problem-solving processes used by designers is embodied in the same way in which any skilled craftsman knows how to perform their skill (Cross 2006, p. 9); a type of techne. For instance, drawing and visualisation is a key skill in design practice. The purpose of drawing or visualising as a part of the design process is to represent something, a logo for example (Figure 19), in order to examine and then confirm, reject, or refine the sketch or prototype (Lawson, 2004).

Figure 19 Student prototypes representing the logo for an exhibition at a studio critique, Northumbria University, October 2019.

Design is an integrative process of problem solving where designers "reorganise a state of affairs that need improving and a target state of affairs that would represent the improvement (Lawson 2004, p. 19). This type of knowledge is hard to externalise

and articulate, which is why design education relies heavily on an apprentice system of learning where, in addition to traditional scholars, a variety of specialists often teach students. Practising designers, technicians, and artisans, for example. This diversity of expertise amongst the faculty at Northumbria University's School of Design and AOD is mentioned on the website of both institutes (School of Design Staff | Northumbria University, 2020; Meet Our Faculty | AOD, 2020) and evidenced on my various trips to Newcastle and Colombo during my field study.

Since design is an activity which "links theory and practice" (Hoadley and Cox 2008, p. 20); design education requires the teaching of methods which integrate theory and practice which is why "learning-by-doing is the most typical way to convey the craft of design" (ibid., p. 29). There is a long tradition in universities and colleges of teaching design by emulating design practice; students tackle design exercises which mimic professional design practice in studio settings (Tovey, 2015). Students who wish to become proficient designers spend their time engaged in design projects which become more complex as they progress to gain experience and skills. "Typically, the end goal is that of achieving a level of capability to function as designers in the professional world" (ibid., p. 37).

Hoadley and Cox (2008, p.20) state that there are two universally held principles in design literature: "good design is iterative"; and "iterations only help if some feedback (data) is used to improve the design for the next iteration". In an academic setting, providing feedback through studio critiques is one of the most common methods of communicating design knowledge to students. Students present their responses to a design brief in multiple iterations and receive constructive feedback to incorporate into the iterative process of visual development. This is because in design education, learning by doing is not merely an act of skilful doing or making, but an activity that requires reasoning; Schön (1983) calls this reflection-in-action.

Reflective action acknowledges the tacit process of thinking while carrying out an activity to deal with uncertainty or complexity as problem-solving in design involves a "breadth-first" strategy (Cross 2006, p. 27). Multiple solutions are explored, and several rejected when found to be flawed to work towards an optimum, viable solution. This process is often intuitive and hard to articulate. Through the process of a studio critique, design is taught by providing verbal feedback and through discussions to make students articulate their design decisions and be consciously selective when exploring a breadth of iterations (Uluoglu, 2000). In addition to studio practice and critiques, Hoadley and Cox (2008, p. 30) state that design instructors need to familiarise their students with canonical examples of design solutions to create a shared vocabulary between them. Teaching design history and sharing design benchmarks are common methods for sharing canonical examples of design.

Designing design education forces educators to consider the general subject and discipline of design, what it is, what they want to develop in students, and how this development can be structured to facilitate learning (Cross, 2006). For this research, exploring notions on design education, methods used to facilitate learning, imbibe values, and design philosophies help provide a frame of reference for delivering transnational design education services at AOD. The following sections explore

the flow of design knowledge from England to Sri Lanka within the framework of facilitating a franchise partnership.

4.3 Offering A Comparable Academic Experience

In order to teach design knowledge, skills, and philosophies to students outside national borders, an academic curriculum needs to be packaged and sent abroad so staff at an overseas institute hosting foreign education services can teach students who are locally based. The curriculum, digitally shared by Northumbria University's School of Design, comprises of self-contained modules which are formally structured units of study with a specified credit value (Figure 20). Each module has a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes used to assess student work. The learning outcomes are measurable statements which indicate what a student should know and be able to demonstrate as a result of completing a module of study. They typically include the ability to research and experiment with a given subject, develop creative solutions or concepts in response to the brief, and show practical skills by executing ideas into tangible outcomes.

In the graphic design department, students start at Level 4 and advance to Level 6 in their final year by completing modules and getting the required number of credits; 120 per year, with each credit being equivalent to 10 hours of study. The levels of study in Figure 20 correspond to the eight levels of educational qualifications used in England. Students enrolled in higher education at an English university must complete Level 6 to earn a BA (Hons) degree (GOV.UK, 2021). Students in Newcastle can also spend an additional year at a work placement, studying abroad, or auditing a course in international business after completing Level 5 and before beginning Level 6 modules.

At each level, students must complete one 20 credit theoretical module designed to develop skills in written and oral communication as well as research and organisation (Northumbria.ac.uk, 2020). Based on their website's module descriptors, at Level 4 students are introduced to historical influences of graphic design so they can expand their visual vocabulary and take inspiration from the past to locate their practice within the broader context of graphic design. At Level 5, students further develop their analytical and critical skills in preparation for writing an extended research project or dissertation on a chosen topic around visual culture at Level 6.

Modules in design practice amount to 100 credits at every level but are split into 20, 40, or 60 credits across the different levels. Each design module includes one or more project briefs or assignments which students must complete to evidence their grasp of the learning outcomes (Appendix 2.1). In addition to conceptual and practical design skills, students are also assessed on their ability to manage their time, critically reflect on their work, and engage with their peer group. This last learning outcome is assessed through in-person interactions with students in the design studios on campus.

Learning is facilitated through lectures, seminars, one-on-one guidance through individual or group tutorials, and independent study. The role of independent study is critical at Level 6 as in addition to producing a theoretical dissertation on a topic of their choice; students are required to spend an entire semester developing a Final

Northumbria University BA (Hons) Degree in Graphic Design

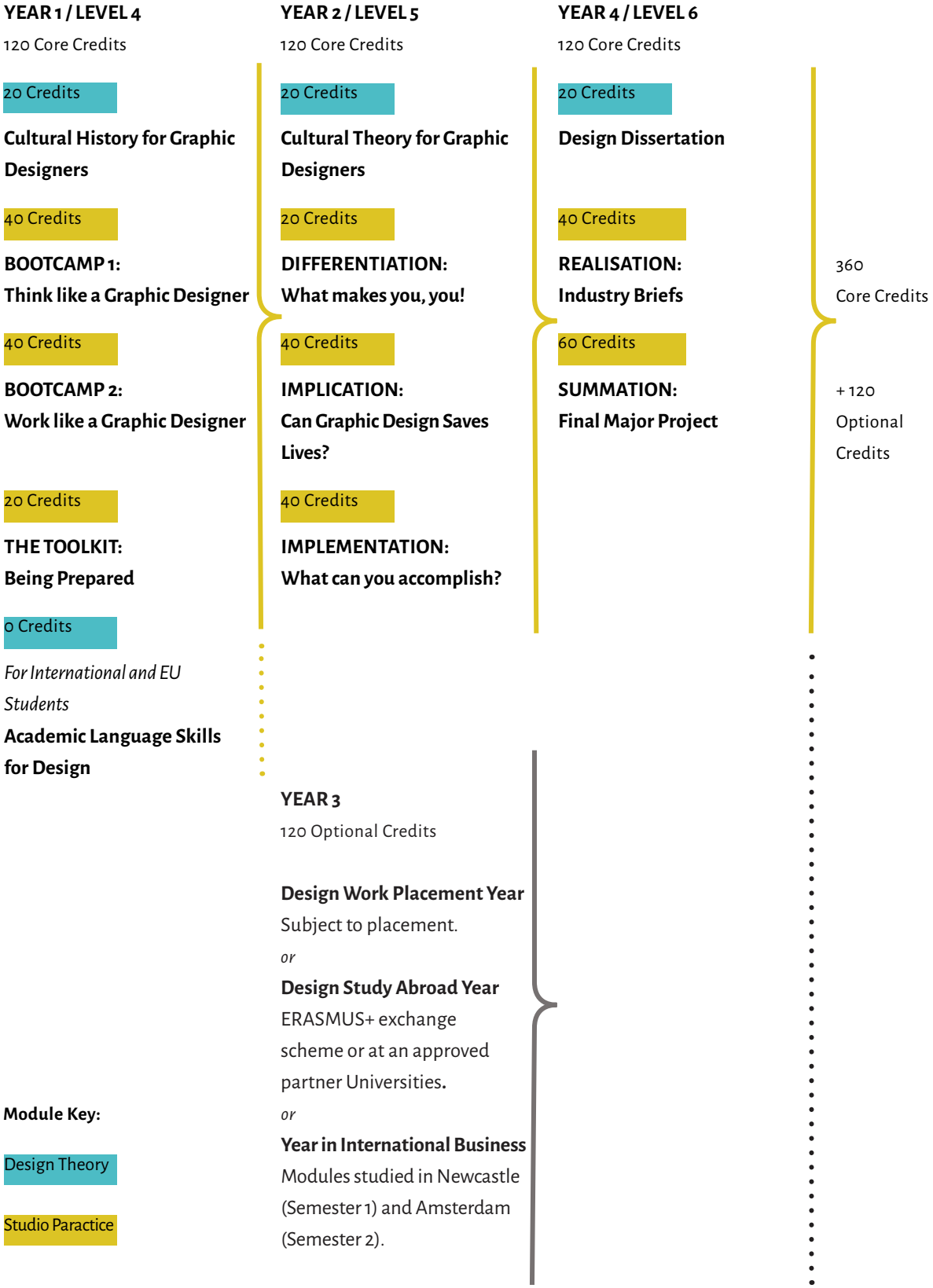


Figure 20 Module and credit structure for the BA (Hons) Graphic Design programme at Northumbria University. Compiled from Northumbria.ac.uk , 2020.

Major Project worth 60 credits. This module offers students' the opportunity to develop a project which can become a significant part of their portfolio to showcase their unique skills. Although students have the option of responding to briefs set by staff or industry partners, this project can also be completely self-initiated. Aside from creative skills, this requires students in their final semester to have autonomy and confidence to manage 600 hours of study.

To facilitate learning in their franchise partnerships, Northumbria University assigns members of staff, known as link tutors, from each disciplinary department to share curricular content and provide guidance and support to their overseas partner. The sharing of content includes module guides for each level of study in a programme, project briefs and deliverables, associated reading and reference lists, and presentations and content for design seminars. In addition to sharing content, the link tutors monitored the delivery of the franchise programme through online dialogue. To assure a smooth flow of and facilitation of a design programme across national borders, certain assumptions or guarantees need to be in place at the host institute to ensure that students receive a comparable, if not the same, experience of a British design education.

While speaking with Toby (not his real name; here, as elsewhere, I use pseudonyms) at Northumbria University's Design Building, a mammoth structure made of metal and glass, he spoke of the checks and validations required for a franchise model along the lines of infrastructure. For example, does the partner have a building with studio spaces where design students can work?

Figure 21 Graphics Studio 1, AOD, March 2019 (left). Design Foundation Studio, Northumbria University, October 2019 (right).

The workspaces in Newcastle and Colombo (Figure 21) had a similar set up with large desks and multiple chairs placed around the room. The design studios were easily comparable in both institutes, including the marks made on the walls and furniture over time by students to claim their space (Figure 22).

George, a senior lecturer at Northumbria and former link tutor to AOD's graphic design department, is primarily based in Newcastle but often travels to South East

Figure 22 Graphics posted on storage shelves in Graphics Studio 1, AOD, March 2019 (left). Graffiti in the Graphics Studio, Northumbria University, September 2019 (right).

Asia where the university also has partnerships with a private design institute in Indonesia. I was interested to know his initial expectations of such hybrid academic systems. Before sitting down for the interview, he gave me a tour of some of the facilities that students in Newcastle have access to; a letterpress workshop and industrial-scale 3D printing in temperature-controlled rooms which looked like a set for a science fiction film, for example. George spoke of the lack of workshop facilities in Northumbria's partner institutes and an expectation that it would affect the quality of student work. However, he was pleasantly surprised when that wasn't always the case.

Regarding the issue of a lack of facilities affecting student work, the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, 2018) has developed a code that offers guidelines for good practice in the academic management of transnational partnerships. They recommend that the learning opportunities available to students be comparable between host and parent provision. Additionally, rather than checking whether one group of students has access to the same physical resources as the other, the QAA recommends investigating whether one group is disadvantaged over another due to a lack of resources as that might be more pertinent (ibid.).

In terms of resources, AOD does not provide its students with similar workshop facilities on campus as those in Newcastle. Claire, a graduate of Northumbria University's School of Design, moved to Sri Lanka with her family close to a decade ago to head AOD's academic team. Over the years, she has taken on many roles at the institute but at the time of my field study spent most of her time driving the creative vision of Design Corp, AOD's parent company. In her experience, the reason the lack of facilities on campus do not affect the quality of student work is the close ties the institute has with the local industry,

> We might not have all the printers that we need but we have factories that can do it. We might not have a printing press for the graphics students, but we have to push and find a way to partner with somebody to do something, and

> if we want to, we can. I think there are a lot of opportunities with the industry who want to partner with us because they also appreciate the (AOD) brand and the association. We use a lot of resources through our friends in the industry, and they can cover a lot of the holes (Interview, February 13, 2019).

Claire's comment of having "friends in the industry" also ties in with Northumbria's vision of a design education mirroring professional practice by working with external collaborators to execute designs since most design studios do not have production facilities in house.

While design facilities can be outsourced, high-speed internet is critical infrastructure for the transfer of digital content and TNE systems are entirely dependent on communication technology to allow for a quick flow of information across national borders. During my time in Colombo, everyone at AOD was prepping for a move to their new premises, a towering block across the street still under construction at the time (Figure 23). The institute moved to the Colombo Innovation Tower in September 2019. Sitting in on a staff meeting with programme leaders, various topics around IT, digitisation, facilities, and workshop equipment was at the forefront of the conversation. For example, staff were assured that the new AOD campus would have hot desks with ethernet cables to ensure constant internet access since the current Wi-Fi was temperamental and that overall, the new building would have better designed IT infrastructure. Aside from teaching, almost all the work done by staff, from accessing curricular content to marking student work on cloud-shared EXCEL sheets was dependent on the internet.

Figure 23 A view of the Colombo Innovation Tower from the entrance to AOD, Colombo, March 2019.

Workshops and IT facilities are tangible infrastructures which are easy to assess while scoping the potential for creating an equivalent educational experience in an academic franchise. As a senior academic and member of Northumbria University's School of Design's management team, Toby is of the opinion that franchise models of TNE are in demand because the partnerships are based on tried and tested education where the evidence of success for academic institutes is the quality of student performance at the institute sending their educational services overseas. If the success of a course is dependent on student performance, then the type of student enrolling to a course becomes an important consideration,

> This is quite a significant one. It is generally assumed that the education that students get, prior to doing the degree courses, is the same. Which of course it isn't. I'm not suggesting it's weaker or stronger, in any context, but it's different. And so, the students arrive at the right age with a generalised education, maybe some college education, and there is an assumption made that this student will just be able to slot into the franchise model. Oh sorry, but I don't think that's the case (Toby, interview, September 19, 2019).

Therefore, while physical infrastructure is essential for delivering an equivalent educational experience in franchises, if the measure of success for a design course is the quality of student work, considering the prior skills and knowledge of students at the host institute becomes essential for them to be successful.

4.3.1 Moderation, Admissions, and a Creative Skills Gap

Quality assurance and maintaining systems for academic oversight is a challenge for both partners, those sending and hosting TNE services (International Higher Education 2017, p 39). Some of the concerns surrounding the quality of TNE provision are in ensuring academic standards are maintained, and student experiences are not compromised (Smith, 2010). Chapter 1 introduced two significant concerns regarding TNE: quality assurance from institutes hosting curriculum; and "foreign degree mills" selling bogus accreditations to students seeking higher education opportunities (Section 1.3).

The University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka recognises this unfortunate reality faced by prospective students and their parents. A page on their website titled "Recognition of Foreign Universities" (Universities Grants Commission Sri Lanka, 2019) lists authentic sources of information on foreign universities and higher education institutes. They state that it is the responsibility of the public to verify the credibility of an institute before registering for a degree programme. As discussed in in Chapter 1 (Section 1.3.2), increasing institutional reputation is one of the main motivations for universities investing in TNE. For countries exporting educational programmes, poor quality services by host institutions can lead to reputational and financial detriment. Countries importing educational services want to ensure a high quality of education as graduates from TNE institutes can facilitate the economic growth of the country.

In this wider context, the process of moderating student work provides evidence of being a bona fide provider of a high-quality programme and ensuring a comparative academic experience. For the AOD-Northumbria partnership,

the process documents the quality of education being delivered as students at AOD have their work moderated against their equivalent cohorts in Newcastle,

> What's interesting is that because we are a franchise, they are technically in the same cadre of students who enter Northumbria at the same time. They have a parallel cadre there, people who they've never met or seen, but whose marks they are directly evaluated against on every single project. The decision of whether they can have a seventy is decided on what someone got a seventy for in the UK. Which means that they have a very real relationship with these people that is never activated (Cole, interview, February 14, 2019).

One way of seeing the development of design ability in students is by comparing students' work throughout their studies as the elementary work of a first-year student should develop into something complex or sophisticated in their final year (Cross 2006, p 24). This type of development assessment relies heavily on the project method and is also the primary method of evaluation in Northumbria's School of Design. Students working towards a design degree are assessed on their ability to evidence whether a module's set learning outcomes have been achieved through the delivery of completed design projects. At AOD, students' work is assessed on the achievement of learning outcomes and then compared with the work of students in Newcastle. However, as mentioned by Toby, students at AOD and those in Newcastle do not have the same backgrounds and prior academic experiences, which proves problematic when comparing one cohort to the other.

Hugo's introduction to Sri Lanka was when he first moved there to teach at AOD close to a decade ago. During his interview, he spoke of taking time to educate himself about South Asian culture and history as a process of adopting Sri Lanka as his home. In his experience, using the same learning outcomes to assess the two cohorts of students was questionable,

> You can argue that learning outcomes must be revised for the kind of upbringing that people have. Europe has art classes as a fundamental class, it's not perfect, but it's there. Whereas here (in Sri Lanka), it's completely non-existent in most schools. If students haven't had practice using divergent thinking or creative problem solving, ever, to not consider that (contextual reality) because it is one of the main learning outcomes, I think is irresponsible as a curriculum (Interview, February 19, 2019).

His words exemplify Toby's previous point about the assumptions made while forming franchise partnerships; former training in art and drawing is a worthwhile skill to have as a design student and a requirement for most undergraduate design courses in the UK. To be accepted to a design programme in Northumbria University, an applicant requires "acceptable Level 3 qualifications", a portfolio of creative work, and in the case of international students, English language qualifications (Northumbria University, 2021). For admission to the graphic design programme at Northumbria, an applicant needs to submit a short portfolio statement discussing their creative inspirations along with visual examples of previous art and design projects done in school.

In the case of prospective applicants to the Northumbria design programme in Sri Lanka, as described by Hugo, a previous introduction to art, design, and divergent thinking is non-existent for many. This point is also backed by a recent study published by the British Council in collaboration with the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka which identified a lack of creative education and soft skills in critical and lateral thinking at the secondary school level in Sri Lanka (British Council and Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka 2020, p. 3). As a private institute, AOD accepted any student who had the required Level 3 educational qualification or equivalent and the capacity to pay the tuition. During the focus group discussions, alumni spoke of AOD marketing itself as an inclusive institute where anyone could join. If you had no prior skills in art and design, you could still learn design "from scratch" (Focus group, March 9, 2019).

To address the creative skills gap, all students who apply for the BA (Hons) programmes are required to complete a short preparatory design portfolio course designed and facilitated by staff at AOD before the official start of the academic year in January. Students must also pass an English language test developed in house, which Northumbria University had approved. The portfolio course involved various workshop sessions in drawing, design software, English language skills, and other discipline-specific skills. For instance, during my time at AOD, I taught a short course on visual storytelling for graphic design and animation students in the portfolio period.

In addition to the franchised design programme, AOD also offers design foundation programmes developed in house. Mary studied design in the UK and has been a part of AOD's academic team for over four years. She developed the design foundation course offered at AOD based on her experience of working with first-year students at the institute,

> Very few of them have critical or analytical skills when they come to university. They don't have opinions; they don't know what they like, what they don't like because they come straight from school where it's been drilled into them that there's a yes or no answer. It's only when you teach the students that you really understand how limited their knowledge or understanding of some of the things we're teaching them. Like, you know, some of them have never held a pencil before attending university (Interview, February 12, 2019).

An example of a strict, yes or no style of teaching in Sri Lanka was illustrated by one of the alumni when describing one of her art classes,

> To give you some context on how stern these techniques are, in my art class, if I tried something different, which I always did, after three sessions, I was asked to leave. For example, how we did collages was you would make a face with coloured paper. So, the hair would be with black paper, and I didn't see the point of it. Why am I tearing black paper and pasting it as hair, I could have just cut the whole thing (as a single shape) and put it there! For people like me, when we left high school, and suddenly AOD was like this is about you creating things the way you want, and you also get qualified for it; I was like-yes! (Chaturi, focus group discussion, February 16, 2019).

For some students, the first year at AOD became a process of unlearning ways of thinking that had been instilled in them. But for many, it was starting from scratch. Although Mary's statement about students having never held a pencil was metaphoric of some students not having drawn anything before coming to AOD, the first year does entail a steep learning curve for many in terms of crafting, execution, and understanding of independent learning and self-reflection.

Ayesha, an AOD alumn with a BA (Hons) degree in graphic design, was working as a freelance designer and visiting lecturer tutoring third-year students on competition briefs at the time of my field research. In her final year at AOD, she was awarded for her typography skills by the London-based International Society of Typographic Designers. Despite her current prowess as a graphic designer, Ayesha struggled during her first year as a design student because her secondary education had a focus on commerce, and she had no former training in creative skills,

> When I started, I did not do well. Portfolio and the first year were a bit rough, but I think I caught up and second and third year were okay, better than the first. I started to understand what was needed. I did practice my illustration skills, but that was not as critical as design thinking and concept development. The main learning I got from this degree was the thinking and how to apply what I learnt and use my skills (Focus group discussion, February 16, 2019).

Ayesha's experience is one example illustrating the notion that at AOD, anyone can learn design from scratch. However, it is unrealistic to expect every student to embrace unlearning and excel at developing new skills in a new educational culture. Theoretically, in collaborative forms of TNE, there are two approaches to curriculum and knowledge development or transfer: an import/export model and a joint curricular model (Knight 2015, p. 40). AOD and Northumbria fall under the import/export model since, as a franchise, AOD is meant to twin the academic structure and content of Northumbria University. As per definitions (ibid.), the sending foreign higher education institute, Northumbria University, is primarily responsible for the curriculum, qualifications and academic oversight. AOD's role as the host institute is limited to providing the space, students, support services, and programme advertising.

Considering the accounts describing the contextual specificities of students at AOD, the staff at both ends of the partnership are aware that copying and pasting the academic content from England to Sri Lanka is an academic oversight. The contextual differences between students in Sri Lanka and England are overlooked and not accounted for, putting students studying in AOD at a disadvantage. Since the academic staff at AOD were the ones aware of how the system of assessment and moderation disadvantaged students in Sri Lanka, the responsibility of managing this oversight falls on them,

> Our first years are very different from what they would see at Northumbria, and we are in a franchise model, so, unable to modulate that first six to nine months of their experience which makes it a little bit rockier than it needs to be. We get many students who have never drawn anything before. We get many students who have shaky language skills that they are still getting

> tutoring for. But there is no way to help them (during class hours) because the timing and delivery of the (academic) units are decided for us. The only way to do it is to put in extra hours. You have to show up at 7 o'clock in the morning and teach and re-teach stuff to people; that's basically the only way to get over that (Cole, interview, February 14, 2019).

Multiple discussions with staff at AOD suggested that at their core, the students who join AOD are not the same as those in Northumbria. Some of the significant differences lie in the fact that social and cultural sensibilities are different in Sri Lanka. Most students come from sheltered backgrounds with a lack of exposure to travel, even within the country outside Colombo city. Additionally, students in Sri Lanka have limited to no prior experience in independent learning. So, the methods of teaching cannot be the same to bring a final year AOD student to a level where they can autonomously manage 600 hours of course work in their last semester (Figure 20). Claire described it as having an emotional responsibility as an academic institute to get the parents to have confidence in allowing their children to become independent and autonomous.

In this context, the staff at AOD need to consider how they can facilitate a design education that does not disadvantage their students from the get-go. Evaluating whether the proper infrastructure is in place to offer students an equivalent learning experience in a franchise is straightforward, as the evidence is physical and easy to evaluate. Ensuring that students can grasp the model of education, succeed academically, and develop a portfolio of work that is of the same quality as students in the parent institute requires methods of practice that are not as easy to account for but are integral to maintaining academic standards.

4.3.2 Curricular Input

Unlike financial flows which can be accounted for in currency, the flow of educational services in a TNE franchise is not as easily quantified. Amanda, a Sri Lankan designer who has academic and managerial responsibilities at AOD, spoke of an operation manual explicitly designed for this partnership sent across from Newcastle to provide guidelines on how things should be executed. The manual is updated annually to detail the programme structure and delivery. It identifies the Northumbria partnership managers and respective subject link tutors and their roles as well as AOD's academic coordinators, management, and subject tutors and their responsibilities. During her interview, Amanda also spoke of the duties of subject tutors being specified in employment contracts at AOD so part-time members of staff in Colombo know that they have a role in facilitating the partnership. A separate manual indicates the financial agreement between the two institutions.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the British Council defines a TNE franchise partnership as "one where a sending higher education institute authorises a host institute to deliver its programme, with no curricular input by the host institution and all study taking place in the host country" (British Council & McNamara Economic Research, 2013). To develop a common framework of TNE categories and definitions, Knight describes a collaborative TNE provision as one where there is *some* form of collaboration between the local and foreign providers (2015, p. 39, stress added). As per her framework, the collaborative element in franchise programmes can involve

"providing physical space, administrative support, and student services to help the foreign provider who is responsible for the academic programme" (ibid.). Knight's definition of collaborative TNE provision prescribes institutional support from the parent institute rather than academic collaboration and continues to perpetuate a one-way flow of information and services from the sending institute to help the host. The field research revealed that even if institutional processes and structures are defined in an operation manual or codebook, it does not guarantee they will be acted upon. To further explore the executive nature of the partnership, I asked members of staff who participated in the field study, academic and managerial, whether they felt the British Council's definition of a TNE franchise (above) encapsulates their everyday reality. Of the ten respondents, five agreed with the definition being reflective of their daily practice and five disagreed. Toby, a member of Northumbria University's senior management in the School of Design, believed the basic premise of TNE aligned with this definition,

> Knowledge gets transferred; in some way, this is the simple precedence of the whole thing. It's often been one-way traffic where you say– I have the knowledge; I'm going to move it over here, and the students over here are going to learn the information I have (Interview, September 18, 2019).

As discussed, the notion of Western education having universal qualities shapes most design curriculum as the historical development of modern design, which originated in the West, is a backdrop for contemporary design culture (Julier et al. 2019, p. 172). Contemporary design was then promoted as having universal design principles and then carried as an international movement to the rest of the world (ibid.). Toby's statement does not account for the difficulty of articulating design knowledge and the reliance of learning by doing (discussed in Section 4.2.1) which makes it hard to move knowledge from one place to another. Several members of staff, regardless of whether they agreed or disagreed with the definition of a franchise partnership, questioned the universal nature of a British design curriculum, and had issue with the statement "no curricular input by the host institution" (British Council & McNamara Economic Research, 2013).

George, a former link tutor for AOD's graphic design department felt the definition should be amended to mention that there is *some* curricular input from the host institute,

> In terms of the host institute not having curricular input, I think that's wrong. Most of the conversations I've had with AOD and other institutes is all about adapting what we've given them to fit their market. We're just used as sounding boards and getting the sign off formally for adapting what we've given them. So, it's got to be flexible; otherwise, it's never going to work. I honestly don't think that we can write a course and give it to somebody in another country without having in-depth knowledge of working there. I couldn't do that; I'd have to have input from the academic team working there (Interview, September 18, 2019).

Amanda, who taught courses in design theory and was also a member of AOD's management team, echoed George's thoughts and agreed that the curriculum delivered

from the sending university would not fit into the (local) context and therefore had to be adapted within the frame of a module's objectives and learning outcomes,

> The most important thing is to keep things in line with the main learning outcomes because if you meet the learning outcomes with different deliverables or approaches, you're still within the same credit framework. It (the British Council's definition) doesn't encapsulate the reality of the AOD - Northumbria partnership because we have discussed and added whatever is necessary for our students to cater to the local market (Interview, February 18, 2019).

Echoing Heskett's argument of design as a discipline not having a codified knowledge system (Heskett, 2015), Emma, a member of the academic team at AOD, felt that unlike a degree in Mathematics, which is comparatively inflexible in content, you could not deliver the Northumbria graphic design programme without having curricular input because design, as a creative subject, is challenging to standardise. This was why assessment did not involve standardised tests.

My conversations on the field with academic staff and senior management revealed that contrary to the transactional definition of an educational franchise, the everyday practice of facilitating this partnership involves a network of stakeholders, creating a web of translocal interactions. After returning to Edinburgh, I created Figure 24 as an attempt to illustrate some of these interactions. Through the process of diagramming the translocal interactions between various stakeholders, the figure exemplifies how, in the everyday practice of facilitating a transnational partnership, not all flows are one-directional.

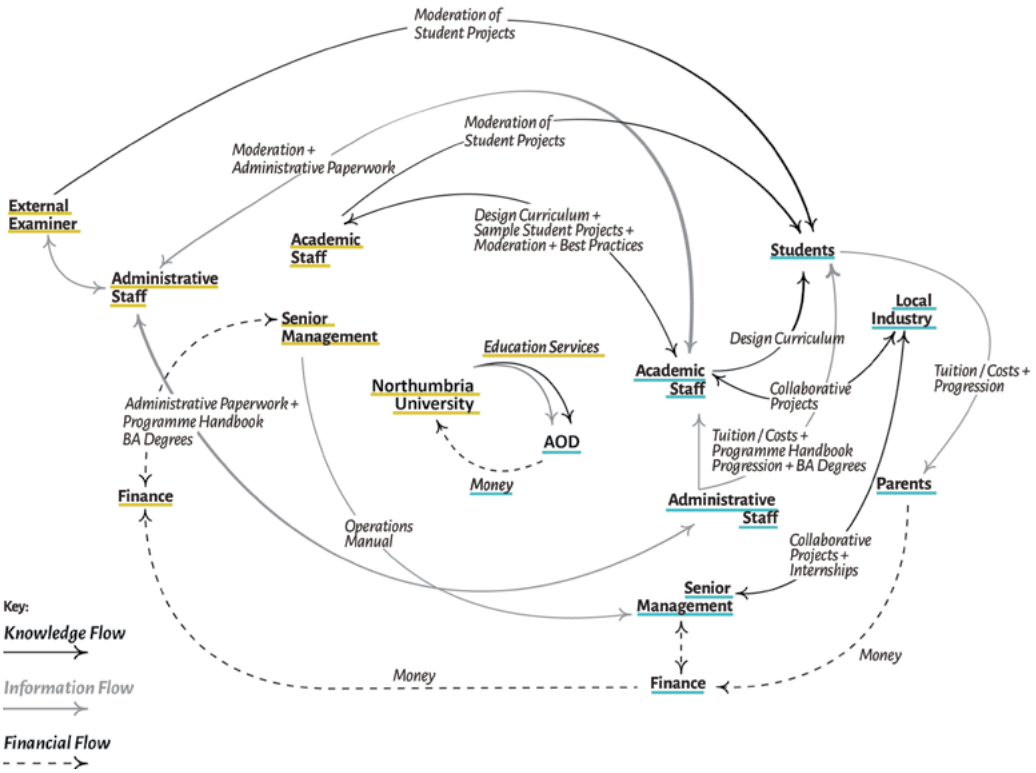


Figure 24 A compilation of flows of educational services and finance between AOD and Northumbria University, 2019.

The flow of education services in the AOD-Northumbria partnership can be divided into knowledge and information (Figure 24). Knowledge, in this case, comprises a set educational curriculum. The design programmes from Northumbria University include modules of study which specify learning outcomes that need to be demonstrated by students, project briefs, and reference lists of recommended literature. Additionally, link tutors might share content for seminars and sample student projects for moderation. Learning involves facilitating a studio practice where students interpret and respond to design briefs. The flow of information comprises administrative paperwork and objects such as programme handbooks, operation manuals, assessment and moderation documents.

Facilitating the smooth functioning of a franchise requires communication amongst various stakeholders in the system to exchange information, whether administrative, academic, or financial. There is dialogue involved in delivering the curriculum, assessing student work, as well as administrative procedures. For instance, as demonstrated in Figure 24, the academic staff in Newcastle send the design curriculum to academic staff in AOD. Given the focus on industry collaborations as part of the curriculum, the academic and senior management team at AOD might work with stakeholders in the local industry to set project briefs, invite guest lecturers, or use their production facilities for students to execute their designs. While the British curriculum is the primary source of knowledge, the modules are translated for facilitation in Sri Lanka by the AOD academic team before reaching students. At times, this also includes input from additional stakeholders like the local industry.

Cross (2006, p. 9) claims that it is the responsibility of the design tutor to be as articulate as possible about what they are trying to teach. The articulation of the aims should be the basis for choosing the content and methods of their teaching. The previous section mentioned contextual differences between students in Colombo and Newcastle, such as prior educational experience, creative skills, and English language proficiency. Staff at AOD shared opinions on how the content and even learning outcomes for academic modules should be sympathetic to students' backgrounds and former education in Colombo. Amanda's take on creating curricular content and using different deliverables or approaches to teach design while staying in line with Northumbria's learning outcomes exemplifies one method to overcome the intrinsic differences among students and facilities in Newcastle versus Colombo.

An example of AOD staff adapting content sent from Newcastle to make the subject matter engaging and appropriate for students delved into the geographic or spatial concepts used to connote concentrations of wealth and power discussed in Chapter 2. Emma moved to Sri Lanka from North America in 2016 to teach in the graphic design department and was a relatively new member of the academic team. She spoke of a first-year design brief titled Northern Design and having to navigate the geographic North-South dichotomy of England based on inequality and domination which she was previously unaware of,

> In the cultural context of Northumbria, it (the design brief) makes sense because the North is like an entity in England, but it's something that even I wasn't familiar with. As somebody who had never been to the UK before, I

> had no idea about the implication of how the North (in England) is different. I mean countries around the world have differences between the North and South, but I didn't know the specifics of this context; I doubt that many students would know that. The whole project was to design something that celebrated 'the North' (Emma, Interview, February 17, 2019).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, interactions among international actors of unequal wealth are referred to as "North-South" relations (Mark 2018, p. 46). The term calls attention to the fact that most global economic activity and wealth are located above the equator, making it more financially vital than the South. Like most metaphors, these terms can have multiple interpretations and can lead to misleading conclusions. In the case of Northumbria's student design brief, Northern Design was about a push by the UK Design Council to establish a design industry in the North and North East of England since, at present, design as an industry is concentrated in London and the South East of England (Design Council, 2018). In the British North-South relationship, unlike the global North-South implication, the North of England is economically disadvantaged.

The North is of significance in Sri Lanka for different reasons. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2), during the civil war in the 1980s and 1990s, most of the violent rebellions occurred in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the island where the Sri Lankan Tamil and Muslim majority is based (Rogers et al., 1998). As a post-war country, the memory of ethnic conflicts, violence, pain and suffering in the North of Sri Lanka is still present today.

The subject matter of design briefs is important for graphic design students; their education trains them to think of themselves as arbitrators of the message between clients or senders and the audience or receivers (McCoy 2003, p.4). A graphic designer's task is to solve their client's communication challenge; developing content is crucial since it counteracts the acceptance of client dictated copy. It also promotes two abilities in a design student: first, interest to develop original content where the reward is the expression of personal concerns; second, the challenge to develop content stimulates the student to determine their values, and what matters to them (ibid., p.7).

For the Northern Design project, Emma changed the brief and widened its scope by asking students to design something in celebration of anything suggestive of a geographic North to persuade them to curate content based on their interests. She intended to make the project topic more engaging for AOD students while avoiding a situation where their desk research on Northern England would be assessed and compared to students' situated insights in Newcastle. Spending an entire class on potential interpretations of the metaphor led to projects which explored the northern lights, a travel campaign for Scandinavian countries, and even the northern region of Sri Lanka, which has its own contextually specific implications (Chapter 2).

Another example of changing the details of a project brief was designing an infographic on data about the European Union. Emma changed the topic to data about the Commonwealth to give first-year students a chance to learn more about the post-colonial political association since Sri Lanka is a member nation. As is often the intention of tutors at AOD, her objective was to motivate students with content they could relate to

and manage any potential disadvantages that they might have in responding to topics that are foreign to them but familiar to students in Northumbria. The issue becomes significant in a franchise programme since students in Colombo have their work directly evaluated against their parallel cohort in Newcastle for every module and associated projects. As mentioned by Cole previously, whether an AOD student can receive a first-class is decided in comparison to the standard of projects that receive the same grade in Northumbria University. Considering the subjective nature of design where students are being taught to develop their unique creative abilities while applying general concepts, the moderation process in a franchised programme in design can be problematic.

On my visits to Newcastle and Colombo, I witnessed this practice of modifying project briefs to enhance the student learning experience in AOD. The graphic design department has a final year module titled Experiential and Collaborative Branding, which has two assignments: one to respond to a competition brief; and the other a group project to work on an exhibition design. During my time at AOD in February 2019, the exhibition design brief asked students to "design an exciting upcoming exhibition, that will inspire, fascinate, and educate people in Colombo" (Appendix 2.4). The proposed exhibition had to be a retrospective of Sri Lankan culture. Students were to select local individuals or events that have impacted art, design, literature, film, music, or dance in the country.

In October the same year, while I was in Newcastle, students were working on the same module and the same brief (Appendix 2.4), except they were asked to design an exhibition on Woodstock, the music festival held in Bethel, New York in 1969. Although cohorts in both institutes could have designed exhibitions on the same topic, by asking students to design a retrospective of Sri Lankan culture, AOD staff were making space to facilitate learning about the local design history and culture in their translation of a Northumbria design module. Such initiatives by AOD staff, although outside the prescribed structure of facilitating a franchise programme, help offer a more locally grounded design education.

4.3.3 Working in the Margins of a Franchise Frameworks

The British Council's definition and the development of frameworks (Knight, 2015) to provide consistency on TNE terminology predetermine transnational academic franchises as systems with a prescribed format of imbalance. The definitions of TNE terminology overlook the exchange of knowledge and reduce collaboration to administrative support. Discussing the everyday practices of the AOD-Northumbria University partnership with my participants revealed that in contradiction to the British Council's definition, there were several instances where the design curriculum from Northumbria was being adapted to suit the local context of Colombo and the regional context of South Asia.

An article by British TNE academic Smith (2010, p. 803) states that codes of practice to guide transnational higher education are "muted" when it comes to discussing opportunities for truly collaborative and culturally appropriate course design. Unless such documents applaud "more equal collaborative provision" (ibid., p. 804), it is easier for exporting institutes to justify the delivery of inflexibly designed courses overseas with final assessment and moderation decisions being

made by the parent institute in the name of equivalence.

The vocabulary used to define British TNE partnerships and services matter because they legitimise certain views of the world and ways of practising. Definitions, policies, and frameworks become expressions of British cultural hegemony with their prescribed one way flows of knowledge from Britain to, in this case, it's former colony. The vocabulary being developed around transnational education attempts to simplify the relationships between institutions hosting and sending educational services into neat, universal categories. In this context, colonialism, universalism or universal reason is seen as a something dynamic which grows; the cultures of the colonised are seen as too contextual or things which cannot grow (Tsing 2005, p.9).

Although a franchise system prescribes a structure of one-way flow of knowledge, this flow consists of several types of objects and information which are filtered through stakeholders. While the role of academic staff in facilitating design is obvious, in the case of design education, senior management, the local industry, and social structures of secondary education or a lack of cultural capital associated with design as a discipline also play a crucial role in facilitating or hindering an educational experience to prepare students for professional design practice (Figure 24).

In the case of AOD and Northumbria, there appears to be a lack of clarity on the fundamental premise of the design education partnership. On the one hand, staff at both institutes agreed that a design curriculum could not simply be transferred and implemented in a new contextual setting. Northumbria University was providing a curricular framework of design modules with learning outcomes and deliverables and staff at AOD were adapting relatable content and design briefs to suit a module's aims and objectives. Staff who were new to teaching at AOD felt that the curriculum was beneficial in providing a framework and structure to learn from and build on. At the same time, the lack of an official standpoint or method on how or when to adapt the curriculum in a franchise made some staff at AOD frustrated at the subjectivity of the process,

> How am I adapting? What are the parameters? How much of the brief can I change? Those things are not clear. It's a shot in the dark when I send material to Newcastle wondering if they will change things. But they never suggest change because we don't get feedback from them. They just say– go ahead with it (Chaturi, interview, February 17, 2019).

The agency and motivation to implement curricular change from a member of staff at AOD requires a collaborative effort and interaction from stakeholders in both institutes to go against or beyond the prescribed structure. By agency, I mean an individual's ability to freely initiate action to resist an external power (Ashcroft et al., 1998). Knight (2015, p. 43) identifies that the role of faculty is critical to the quality and sustainability of TNE provision and requires further research. As exemplified in the narrative data, adapting the franchised design programme is a significant part of the work done by the academic team at AOD. However, this work remains in the margins of TNE practice as the official frameworks for delivering a franchise programme do not account for them.

4.4 A Western Perspective of Design

While reflecting on the value of a foreign design education overseas, Hugo, a former member of AOD's academic team, felt that there is not more value in a British design education system compared to other Western countries. According to him, the value lies in accessing a developed curriculum, particularly in Sri Lanka, where there is a lack of structured design curriculum, compared to design institutes in the West, because of a lack of design education history. For instance, in terms of the partnership being studied, Northumbria University, a former polytechnic, became a university in the 1990s. AOD, in comparison, was privately founded in the early 2000s and partnered with Northumbria University in 2010. In this case, partnering with a British university provides students in Sri Lanka an opportunity to study a developed design programme and have their qualifications recognised globally.

My interview participants from Northumbria spoke of a British degree in design being valuable because of Britain's history in developing quality higher education as well as a creative sector which contributes significantly to the economy. The latter point is exemplified by the fact that as of 2016, the UK's arts and culture industry generated over £21 billion in turnover (Centre for Economics and Business Research, 2019),

> Design, in particular, exports very well, we have a high reputation about what UK design is. But we also have a high reputation about what UK design education is. So, we actually have a twin, bi-folded approach. People recognise that we have high-quality design, and then we also have high-quality design education. The two are hand in glove and work very well (Toby, interview, September 18, 2019).

While the British design industry may be a significant contributor to the country's economy, the number of students applying to design higher education programmes in the UK is on the decline because of a government focus on promoting STEM subjects, increased cost of tuition, and lack of art education in secondary schools (Wong, 2019; Design Council, 2018). Cross (2006, p. 26) also admits that an increased attention on design education in recent years has exposed the lack of clearly articulated and well-understood principles of design education, making Toby's assertion of UK's high-quality design education, questionable.

Being a British university, Northumbria's design curriculum, is inherently Eurocentric; while design for and by the South cannot be free of Northern perspectives, Fry (2017, p. 1) suggests adopting them critically and selectively. Huppatz's article, Globalizing Design History and Global Design History addresses how most texts in design history have a standard narrative which describes the triumphant rise of the West (2015, p 184). This narrative is also an inherently Eurocentric perspective which in turn perpetuates a colonial structure of knowledge which dismisses views from the South.

There are clear examples of teaching design from an exclusively Eurocentric perspective in the Northumbria design programme. Hugo spoke of Northumbria University's curriculum making no mention of Indian, Japanese, or South American design history, for example. This gap in the curriculum can perpetuate the notion that

all design is Western or that Western design is superior. An analysis of the complete reading and design reference lists for the BA (Hons) Graphic Design department which constituted of sixty-eight titles including publications, periodicals, and journals exemplifies this point; only one title, 'You Are Here: A New Approach to Signage and Wayfinding' (Victionary, 2013) was published in Hong Kong (Appendix 2.5). The remaining sixty-seven references were all from Europe and North America. All the titles in the reference list were in English, and most of the publications were exclusively from English-speaking countries.

In contrast, as a trilingual country, most Sri Lankan's are fluent in at least two of its three official languages: Sinhala; Tamil; and English, but a design course from Britain does not consider such contextual specificities with English being the exclusive language of instruction. In the study of graphic design, this also suggests that the study of typography, an integral component for the education of a graphic designer, only considers the Latin alphabet; dismissing the *embodied cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 2019) of multi-lingual students. For instance, in 2016, while she was still a student at AOD, Ayesha won a typographic student competition for her response to a brief titled the 'The Undiscovered Country', a quote from the play Hamlet which is a metaphor for death. Her design used the medium of Latin type to express the horrors of the anti-Tamil communal riots of the 1980s, which led to the thirty-year civil war in Sri Lanka. She curated her content by gathering first-hand accounts of the riots as witnessed by family members and translating them to English since the brief specified rigorous attention to Latin typographic details such as punctuations and capitalisation, for example.

The comments she received from the panel of judges described her project as a strong, effective, emotional piece of work. As her tutor, I rhetorically questioned the pervasiveness of English as the default language for typography and the loss of value in such a contextual piece designed to suit the comfort of a Western audience as a requirement. Said (1978) argues that what makes European culture hegemonic, both in and outside Europe is the idea of European identity as superior in comparison to all the non-European peoples and cultures. While the scope of a global design history might be unclear (Huppatz, 2015), the exclusion of design references from the Global South in a design curriculum preserves the hegemony of Western design and aesthetics.

While reflecting on the theme of Western hegemony in design curricula during his interview, Toby shared a conversation he had had with a professor of design in Beijing on the valued components of global design education. The professor from Beijing shared that at their institute, they taught students two languages in addition to their design courses, English and Spanish. They expected their students to become fluent in both. In this way, when they have completed their design degrees, they are fluent in Mandarin, English, and Spanish, giving them the lingual agency to work in almost any part of the world,

> And you suddenly realise that actually, the UK education while regarded as being absolutely the finest in the world, some places are training people to be better global students than we do. So, for example, in Sri Lanka, how many languages are the students being taught alongside their design studies? They

> may already speak two or three. But in the UK, we don't do that because we're slightly arrogant that only English is the right way forward and I'm not sure it is (Interview, September 18, 2019).

Toby's point of arrogance aside, his anecdote highlights the potential for deliberating changes that could offer a more robust, contextually relevant design education to students in Sri Lanka, which takes advantage of their inherent skill of being multilingual, for example. On a pragmatic note, Amanda and Chaturi, both Sri Lankan designers who had academic roles in AOD, mentioned how students had to learn research ethics law practised in the UK even though they were most likely to practice in Sri Lanka. In terms of their future professional practice, AOD students would benefit from knowing more about the legal and ethical laws practised locally. A report on the creative and cultural industries in Sri Lanka affirms this concern and states a need to "strengthen knowledge about and access to IP rights" among those employed in the creative industries, which include design (British Council and Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka 2020, p. 52).

In addition to curricular content, there was also the importance of learning to work with local facilities and social institutions. Hugo spoke of Colombo's printing and bookbinding services; while they are available, their services are not as streamlined compared to those in England, where one can share files digitally, place an order, and have prints delivered to you. This meant preparing students in Sri Lanka to develop social skills to work with crucial actors in the local industry to realise their designs. For instance, during my field visit to AOD, I was taught a screen-printing workshop to first-year students in the graphic design department. Since the printing workshop at AOD did not have a technician, as part of the course, I accompanied students to Imperial Printers, a professional screen-printing facility, to introduce them to technicians whom they might have to collaborate with in the future.

During one of the focus group discussions, Ananya, who graduated in 2015, spoke of the much more involved process of overseeing her work at the printers to make sure it was well executed. A skill she noticed some of her colleagues who did not study at AOD lacked,

> Our tutor was like, you have to stay at the printers and check what they do because that end product matters. So, we were there, we were checking in with the printers; we knew the paper, we knew where to get it if they didn't have it. We knew how to stitch a book; we learned all that. So now as an industry person I sort of see that as a gap (in others). It's like step by step you need to tell them what to do (Focus group discussion, February 16, 2019).

Ayesha spoke of learning to navigate the chaos of Pettah, Colombo's busiest open-air market and how that experience helped her professional practice working as an in-house designer for a company with diverse ventures in agroforestry, hospitality, and retail,

> I remember going through small creepy lanes that I would normally never go through to, you know, find a book binding lady. And that sort of prepared us.

> When I was working at Saraii and Saaraketha, I worked with another person who had ten years more experience that I did. But, when she was working on their packaging, she struggled so much to get it printed because she didn't know how to work with the printer (Focus group discussion, February 16, 2019).

Reflecting on Cross's statement of design educators having to consider what they want to develop in their students and then structuring methods to facilitate that learning; to build their students' social problem-solving skills (section 4.1.2), academic staff at AOD must facilitate the learning of soft skills in communication, collaboration, and problem solving in spaces outside campus which do not fit the traditional domain of academia: in street markets like Pettah, for example. This example of facilitating learning outside the studio and navigate the social institutions of a crowded multicultural Sri Lankan market for design materials and crafting services echoes with Jani's suggestion discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5); the practical and theoretical aspects of a design education, must focus on design applications for diverse cultures and human systems (Jani, 2011).

In addition to learning the nuances of working collaboratively as a design professional in Sri Lanka, there was a concern of not being able to establish a Sri Lankan design identity in a franchised programme. During a conversation on the topic of Western influence on students at AOD, academic staff member Emma felt that the situatedness of the institute makes it Sri Lankan, but depending on the temperament of students, some may become less Sri Lankan through their experience of studying at AOD because their work is being critiqued through a Western lens. At the same time, she also spoke of witnessing students find their voice,

> I have a lot of faith in the development of the individual voice that is happening in this current time and age. There is a trend of retaining your voice with pride. Maybe it depends on who you subscribe to, but it seems people are becoming more self-assured by their identity, especially South Asians (Interview, February 17, 2019).

Mary spoke of a similar concern of managing the Sri Lankan identity of students while teaching Eurocentric design knowledge through a British curriculum. She felt it boiled down to how they, as academic staff, adapt the course so that students who initially come in without definitive aesthetic taste or creative skills, graduate as adults with design skills and the soft skills to practice as reflexive professionals with an authentic, locally grounded design identity.

In the context of how knowledge can influence design identity, Tsing suggests learning about the "collaborations through which knowledge is made and maintained" (2005, p.13) since collaboration is not a simple act of sharing information. Tsing warns that the act of collaboration creates new identities, but not necessarily to everyone's benefits; the process of standardising global knowledge, or British design knowledge, in this case, incompatible truths are suppressed (ibid.). This circulation of universal or global knowledge creates gaps; teaching multi-cultural design history, typography and lettering in local scripts, local research ethics and intellectual property laws, and

contextually dependent social problem-solving skills or phronesis are some of the examples the field study identified.

4.5 Delivering A British Design Education Framework

This chapter began with two research questions,

First— *how does knowledge really flow in TNE systems?* The narrative data reveals that in the transnational partnership between Northumbria University and AOD, knowledge flows from Newcastle to Colombo in the form of design curriculum in English, transferred digitally using information technology to ensure consistency in educational content. However, much like urban traffic, there are various bumps and contextually specific roadblocks which stem the flow of education services. Stakeholders at AOD work around these blocks in the margins of a franchise framework to deliver a design education experience comparable to what is offered on campus in Northumbria University.

Second— *how do TNE systems acknowledge contextual specificities?* Design pedagogy is contextual; the institutional structure of AOD in terms of facilities alongside social influences of language and limited art and design education at a school level in Sri Lanka requires the academic staff to adapt the design knowledge being transferred from England to suit the local context. Forms of adaptation includes curricular input, developing partnerships with the local industry for access to facilities and collaborative project briefs, negotiating the moderation of student projects, and developing a design foundation course to manage creative skills gaps in students before they enrol in the BA design programmes from Northumbria University.

This process of academic or pedagogic adaptation can be considered in terms of cultural translation (Bhabha, 2004). Bhabha has used the term translation to discuss postcolonial migrant culture, which he describes as a "translational phenomenon" (2004, p. 320) where meaning and identities are constantly transformed through encounters with cultural difference. The process of translation involves an element of resistance and ambivalence while moving through and negotiating different cultures, leading towards hybridity rather than assimilation (ibid.). The academic staff at AOD who participated in the field research were working towards a hybrid academic experience which translates Northumbria University's design programme to suit the contextual realities of the students in Colombo and create a better transnational learning environment.

However, the process of translating cultural difference at AOD does, on occasion, involve feelings of ambivalence towards Northumbria University and their imposed structures as exemplified by Chaturi's previous comment on the frustrations of not having clear guidelines on adapting the Northumbria curriculum, for instance. Hugo mentioned that the amount of curricular input by a member of the academic team at AOD was directly dependent on the quality of the collaborative relationship with their link tutors. He goes on to say that a perfect transnational partnership, instead of sending and receiving curricular content, would involve "a sharing of teaching tools and resources" (Hugo, Interview, February 19, 2019). In this regard, scholars of TNE, such as Knight (2013, p.87), have expressed that improvement in the teaching

and learning processes and curricular reform are some of the positive outcomes of international collaborations.

On a more general note, Papanek (2019, p. 287) suggests design education be an interactive process in which the environment changes the learner, and the learner changes the environment. Similarly, at AOD, staff were making changes by adapting the franchise programme based on their experience of teaching students at AOD. Although spoken of as a necessity by members of staff in both institutes, this adaptation is not acknowledged as an essential part of the franchise's academic practice. While these practices ease the flow and reception of a British design education curriculum overseas, they are not mentioned in any policy documents or literature on TNE. Instead, this work appears in the margins of TNE systems which some members of staff accept, and others question for its lack of structure.

Unless the literature and vocabulary on TNE practice applaud "more equal collaborative provision" (Smith 2010, p. 804), it is easier for institutions exporting the curriculum to continue this one-way flow of knowledge without input from their partners. Cole, as a more experienced member of staff at AOD who also oversaw the management of all academic staff, believed that they were not delivering a British design education but a British framework,

> The delivery of a British design education in a different context is not really the delivery of a British design education. We are modifying content designed for British students to match with an audience whose secondary educational experience has been wholly different from that of a British person. Which means that though the outcomes look the same, and we are teaching the same classes, the content is going to vary wildly from what will be delivered in the UK to a group of British students and what is delivered here to a varied group of multi-national, differently lingual, some of them working in English as a third language, group (Interview, February 14, 2019).

During his interview, when asked what a perfect transnational design partnership would be, Cole felt that institutes across borders should partner to build a bridge between design thinking in two parts of the world to look at how their identities can meld to advance both institutions.

In response to the questions put forth (Appendix 1.4), the various examples and perspectives of staff and alumni at AOD expressed in this chapter emphasise a need to modify a British curriculum or education model to suit a partner nations local context. Tsing uses the term *friction* to describe awkward and unequal experiences of interconnection across difference (2005, p. 4). These unequal, heterogenous, frictional encounters co-produce culture and can lead to new arrangements of power (ibid.).

The everyday practices of staff involved in facilitating this academic partnership challenge current definitions of TNE programmes and conceptual frameworks specifying collaborative TNE provision. Although these definitions intend to be "both robust and flexible" (Knight 2015, p. 37), they are unable to grasp the complexity of the everyday realities of facilitating such programmes. The next chapter further

explores the AOD-Northumbria University partnership in terms of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998); that is, a transnational community of TNE practitioners where design facilitators work towards a shared practice but grapple with points of friction in their asymmetrical relationship of adapting a British design curriculum to accommodate a Sri Lankan context.

Ch 5 Navigating Friction: A Case for Transnational Communities of Practice

Across Sri Lanka, whether in a bustling city or serene coastal village, there are bakeries and street carts selling short eats; the local term used for a variety of sweet, savoury, and spicy snacks. Quintessentially Sri Lankan and egalitarian in their affordability, my personal favourite is the *maalu paan*, a spicy fish bun which cost thirty or forty Sri Lankan rupees (approximately 15 pence) during my last visit to Colombo in 2019. The word *paan*, Sinhalese for bread, is derived from the Portuguese word pao from when bread and baked foods were introduced to the island by Sri Lanka's Portuguese colonisers in the sixteenth century (Hussein, 2017). What is now cherished to be an essential part of Sri Lankan culinary culture, is one of the many legacies of the nation's diverse colonial heritage.

During a staff breakfast meeting with all the disciplinary programme leaders at AOD, the catering comprised of various short eats, which I, as a silent observer, felt compelled to help myself to as the academic staff were engaged in discussions on various topics of a lengthy agenda (Appendix 2.6). The meeting was chaired by a member of the management team who, in addition to having teaching responsibilities, oversaw academic administration. The issues discussed ranged from student attendance and feedback, a new system of assessment records developed in-house to be implemented by staff, logistics of moving to their new campus at the Colombo Innovation Tower, and events to promote AOD. The AOD website repeatedly stresses the input and influence of Northumbria University in offering a "Northumbria experience in Sri Lanka" (AOD x Northumbria University, 2021); however, listening in on the discussions, what stood out was the absence of topics which mentioned their partners in Newcastle. During that meeting, the staff at AOD presented an image of an autonomous academic institute not bound to a franchise partner.

Individual and institutional agency is the key theme explored in this chapter. As defined in Chapter 2, the concept of agency in the context of postcolonialism is the ability of an individual to freely initiate action to resist an imperial power (Ashcroft et al., 1998). From the perspective of educational science, professional agency is defined as the autonomy "exercised when professional subjects and or communities influence, make choices and take stances on their work and professional identities" (Eteläpelto et al. 2013, p. 61). The narratives gathered from interviews in Colombo exemplify the professional agency of individual members of staff and the collective agency of a community of academic practitioners at AOD through acts of resistance as well as making autonomous choices to take a stance on facilitating Northumbria's design curriculum.

The manifestation of professional agency of AOD's academic staff aligns with what Wenger, an educational theorist, calls an "emergent structure" of an institution determined by its community of practitioners (1998, p. 244). According to Wenger (1998), a community of practice consists of practitioners who share a concern for the work they do and develop a repertoire of resources, experiences, and tools to evolve their shared practice. When the emergent structure of work practices at an institution do not align with the designed structure, it creates friction. The term friction is used to describe awkward and unequal experiences of interconnection

across difference which co-produce culture and can lead to new arrangements of power (Tsing 2005, p. 4). Here, friction is understood as the "awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference" (ibid.). Frictions are productive moments of misunderstanding, not a synonym for resistance. They are essential to the study of a community of transnational practitioners who have conflictual relationships since they act as a catalyst to demonstrate agency.

The literature review in Chapter 1 revealed that most research on TNE is conducted from the perspective of institutes which send their curriculum overseas. The frictional encounters presented in this chapter are from the point of view of staff at AOD, addressing the knowledge gap in TNE research by presenting an in-depth perspective of facilitating TNE at a host institute. Using Wenger's features of a well-established community of practice as a frame of reference, this chapter presents points of friction in the everyday experience of facilitating TNE, which hinder the development of a joint enterprise. The exploration of the various points of friction is essential in revealing the emergent practices in TNE systems as practitioners exercise their agency to challenge established policies, definitions, and frameworks.

5.1 Communities of Practice and Communication

The anecdotes and reflections shared in the previous chapter show the complexity in facilitating a TNE franchise as it involves multiple stakeholders with distinct roles. Figure 24 visualised the multiple flows of information and points of exchange involved in making the partnership function (Chapter 4, section 4.2.3). To offer a better learning experience for students based in Colombo, academic staff at AOD use their agency to work around or in the margins of the defined programme structure of a franchise which, in theory, does not permit curricular input by a host institute (British Council & McNamara Economic Research, 2013). By further analysing the narrative data shared by academic staff at a TNE host institute, this chapter explores the implicit community of academic practice formed by staff at AOD and Northumbria University whose members engage in various activities to facilitate the franchise programme.

The narrative data in Chapter 4 established the need to modify the Northumbria curriculum to suit the educational context of AOD. The agency and ability to implement curricular changes by members of staff at AOD requires communication and a collaborative effort amongst stakeholders in both institutes. The importance of communication and relationship building in maintaining and developing TNE partnerships has also been stated by academics and institutional stakeholders invested in the growth of British TNE (Smith, 2017 and 2020; O'Mahony, 2014; Keay, May and O' Mahony, 2014).

In 2014, the Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE) funded a study on enhancing student learning and staff development in TNE (O' Mahony, 2014). A participant of the study felt most contact amongst TNE practitioners "focus on the mechanical process of validation" rather than communication and relationship building (ibid., p. 34). The study highlights the scope for detailed research at the level of individual academic institutes to understand how staff interpret and practice TNE delivery as well as the value of regular communication between partnering

institutes to identify and address academic and administrative issues and sharing good practices to manage students' expectations in host institutes (O' Mahony, 2014).

Based on the data gathered by O'Mahony, a follow up study explored ways in which Wenger's characteristics of a community of practice (1998) could help provide a theoretical framework for improving communication and creating more effective TNE partnerships. (Keay, May and O' Mahony, 2014). TNE researcher Smith (2017) also recommends setting up communities of practice to develop a more collaborative and equitable transnational practice for a better-quality student learning experience. While using Wenger's framework of a community of practice to improve the functioning of TNE partnerships has been explored previously, the value of the framework has not been explored from the perspective of TNE host institutes. The field research for this project addresses this gap in knowledge.

Previous studies on enhancing student learning experiences in British TNE are written from the perspective of academic institutes in the UK which provide their curriculum overseas (Keay, May and O' Mahony 2014; O'Mahony 2014; Smith 2017). They argue that the work in TNE partnerships must go beyond "what can be recorded through a pre-defined partnership agreement" (Keay, May and O' Mahony 2014, p. 265); instead, research should focus attention on the working process, that is, how partners interact and engage collaboratively over time to achieve the best possible outcomes for students to share best practices (ibid.).

The previous chapter presented how, in this franchise partnership, knowledge flows in the form of a design curriculum written in in English, transferred digitally from Northumbria University to ensure consistency in the educational programme. However, the narrative and anecdotal data from academic staff and senior management from both institutes suggests that a design curriculum cannot simply be transferred and implemented in a new contextual setting. In the actual functioning of the franchise programme, Northumbria University is providing an educational framework which includes modules of study with specified learning outcomes and deliverables which experienced academic staff at AOD were adapting to suit their local context. The disparity in institutional facilities as well as the diverse creative abilities and language skills of the students at AOD require the academic staff to adapt the design knowledge being exported from England to offer a comparable learning experience in Colombo.

This importance of adapting the design curriculum was also stressed by George, a former link tutor for AOD, who over several years of working with many transnational partners of Northumbria University realised that there cannot be a system where one size fits all. In his opinion, as long as academic standards set by Northumbria University were being maintained, there had to be room for flexibility to ensure that transnational design courses did not lose their personality and become generic,

> You lose the personality of something, of an object or whatever it might be and that is definitely not what you want to happen, it defeats the object of being a designer actually. It goes against everything that we want to hold dear to us. Especially now that design is pointing itself to authenticity all the

> time. So, purely I think it is having a system or structure that is flexible and then there is good, honest communication between those different parties that can allow for interpretation (Interview, September 18, 2019).

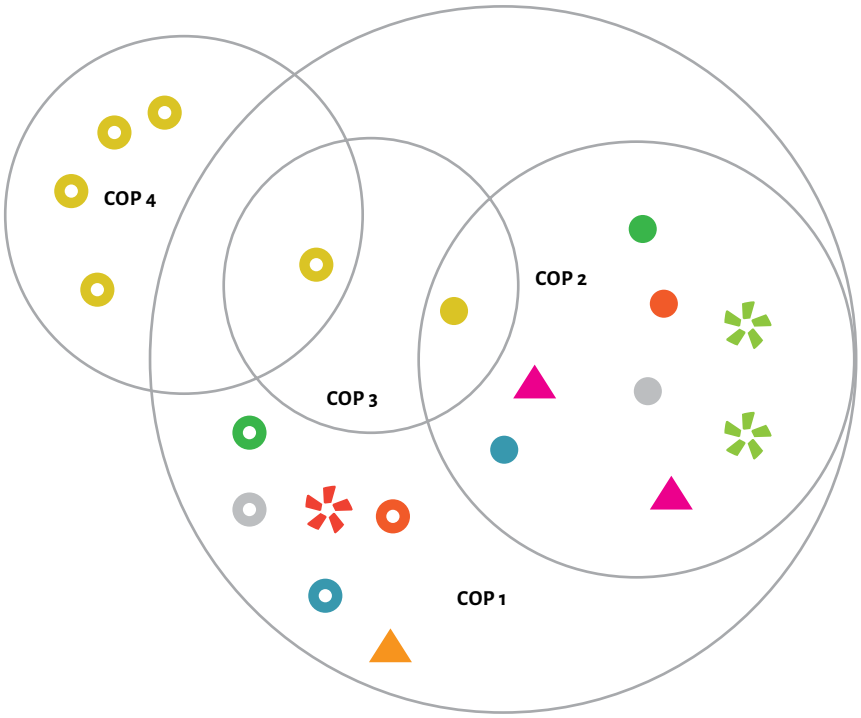
From a wider perspective of British institutions providing TNE services, the most challenging aspects of TNE are related to cultural issues: communication styles; learning and teaching styles; and challenges in quality control and local regulatory systems (O'Mahony, 2014). This insight is based on a study which included participants from thirty-two higher education institutes in the UK who deliver TNE services in over forty countries, including Sri Lanka (ibid., p. 22). The key findings of the study highlight that although TNE is viewed as a collaboration or partnership by universities providing TNE services, there are challenges to overcome, particularly relating to communication. At the same time, the study suggests that local staff responsible for delivering a TNE programme were, in general, enthusiastic (ibid.) which raises questions about the root of communication challenges between partners.

By building on the key findings of the initial study, further research (Keay, May and O' Mahony 2014) investigated whether the development of communities of practice (Wenger 1998) within TNE arrangements could support the improvement of learning and teaching. This study explored how Wenger's features of a community of practice could provide a theoretical framework for improving communication across cultural contexts and create more effective TNE partnerships and raise the quality of learning experiences for students. The study argues that crucial attention needs to be paid to the process of facilitating TNE; specifically, how partners "interact and engage collaboratively over time in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for students" (Keay, May and O' Mahony 2014, p. 265). The development of communities of practice which focus on the quality of the relationship between partners can help achieve better TNE practice (ibid.).

The studies by the Higher Education Academy cited in this section address an existing knowledge gap in understanding how staff understand and practice TNE delivery (O' Mahony, 2014; Keay, May and O' Mahony, 2014). This chapter begins to bridge that knowledge gap by examining narratives that offer an in-depth look at the lived experience of facilitating TNE from a community of academic practitioners at a host institute. The empirical data offers insights into how an educational structure and curriculum designed and delivered in the UK translates in an offshore context.

5.1.1 Characterising Communities of Practice

The term *community of practice* was first coined and developed by social anthropologist Jean Lave and educational theorist Etienne Wenger (1991) and further developed by Wenger (Wenger 1998; Wenger and Wenger-Trayner, 2015) to recognise the role of social relationships in influencing learning. Communities of practice are defined as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger and Wenger-Trayner 2015, p. 1). They are formed by people who are engaged in a process of collective learning, in a shared domain of human endeavour (ibid.). Examples include a band of artists seeking new forms of visual expression, a clique of pupils defining a shared identity in school; or, as in this case, a group of administrators and design educators developing a shared practice to facilitate TNE.



Key:

Academic Staff at AOD

Academic Staff at Northumbria University

Administrative Staff at AOD

Administrative Staff at Northumbria University

Management Staff at AOD

Management Staff at Northumbria University

COP 1:
Administrative Staff +
Academic Staff +
Management Staff across AOD and Northumbria University

COP 2:
Administrative Staff +
Academic Staff +
Management Staff at AOD

COP 3:
Graphic Design Programme Leader at AOD +
Graphic Design Link Tutor at Northumbria University

COP 4:
Graphic Design Dept. at Northumbria University

Figure 25 Mapping Communities of Practice (COP) across AOD and Northumbria University.

Wenger (1998, p. 73) characterises a community of practice as different from a network or club by displaying three key elements:

1. mutual engagement
2. a joint enterprise
3. and a shared repertoire

The first characteristic of practice states that membership in a community is a matter of mutual engagement since "practice does not exist in the abstract" (ibid.). Members of a community must engage in joint activities such as sharing information and building relationships to advance their domain of interest. During my time in the field, I observed or engaged with multiples communities of practice in, and across AOD and Northumbria University that exist based on mutual engagement (Figure 25). First, all stakeholders involved in facilitating the AOD-Northumbria franchise, that is, academic, administrative and management staff are members of an implicit community of practice based on their continuous engagement to deliver a transnational design programme. My research participants also spoke of disciplinary or people specific communities of practice. For instance, the academic team in charge of the graphic design programme in Newcastle work together to continually design, refresh, and facilitate the programme. Additionally, the programme leaders at AOD manage their disciplinary departments but work together as a community to forward AOD's objectives as a private design institute.

The second characteristic is to establish coherence in a community by negotiating joint enterprise which is an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. This is not just a stated goal, but helps participants develop a relationship of mutual accountability that is an integral part of their practice (Wenger 1998, p. 78). The shared domain of interest between AOD and Northumbria University, as mentioned in Chapter 4, is to cultivate design knowledge and expertise for students to apply as professional designers in the creative industries. An interview participant from AOD described them as an ideal match for Northumbria "because we come from the same idea of, you know, design for purpose and industry connections" (Claire, Interview, February 13, 2019). This meant the design curriculum had significant focus on industry practice and external collaboration.

Finally, a shared repertoire is the development of resources such as routines, tools, stories, or concepts by a community through sustained engagement over time (Wenger 1998, p. 84). This final characteristic is a point of consternation in the AOD-Northumbria partnership for two reasons; first, as a franchise, there was an established structure of one directional flow of academic resources such as curricular content from Newcastle to Colombo. Second, staff at AOD felt that given the format of the partnership, Northumbria University did not recognise AOD as an equal partner with resources to share. One interview participant from AOD stated, "although Northumbria University would never acknowledge it, I think they've learned a little bit from us as well. A lot of the projects that they do, or see, or think about are reciprocal, and I think that it would be quite nice to have a bit more of an input in those things," (Mary, Interview, February 12, 2019).

Learning within a community of practice is an experience of identity formation as developing a shared competence distinguishes members from other people.

By developing the three characteristics in parallel, over time, members cultivate a community and build relationships by learning from each other (Wenger 1998). Such communities can be implicit or explicit, they are a part of institutions regardless of being recognised or not and are, by nature, self-organising (Wenger 1998, p. 251). As a senior lecturer at Northumbria with several years of engagement with the University's transnational partners, George felt there was not an explicit recognition of the notion of a community of practice in the partnerships,

> If you don't engage with it (the community of transnational colleagues) then there is no community of practice. Then you've got nothing to offer. I think it happens here (in Newcastle). The definition is a really interesting definition… I think that 'practitioners who share a concern for the work they do and develop a repertoire of resources, experiences, and tools to evolve their shared practice' just happens. Perhaps I'm not conscious of it? (George, Interview, September 18, 2019).

There can be varying levels of engagement in communities of practice, as stated by George while reflecting on the implicit communities of practice within Northumbria University that he felt aligned to. However, he did not include the academic practitioners in the offshore institutes when reflecting on the communities of practice he felt a part of,

> I suppose a community of practice is what we do here in small little pockets like myself and my colleague who lead the final year or in a wider pocket which is us and graphic design and an even wider pocket of us and the design school (George, Interview, September 18, 2019).

It is important to note that a community of practice does not require formal reification, it exists through the engagement of its participants. The engagements within a community are not necessarily harmonious where all members feel like they are contributing towards a common goal (Wenger, 1998). A comment by a member of AOD's academic team on engaging with peers in Northumbria exemplifies this point,

> We have so little to do with Northumbria University. I mean, over the years I have obviously built-up relationships and there are people I really know and professionally respect, and I know I could speak to about things. But, if I was to come in tomorrow or at the beginning of this year, or last year, I would say there is no system that we're working to right now (Mary, Interview, February 12, 2019).

The coherence of a community of practice can be a strength or weakness; as a part of an institutional structure, they are not intrinsically beneficial. However, they are useful for research on facilitating transnational education as spaces of "engagement in action" (Wenger 1998, p. 85); they inevitably affect their members and hold the key to transformation and change.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the research design of the fieldwork paid close attention to institutions as complex systems embedded in ruling relations that are organised

around a distinctive function. In this case, the function is the delivery and management of a TNE design programme. As illustrated in Figure 24 (Chapter 4, section 4.2.3), a considerable number of tasks in the functioning of a TNE programme requires translocal forms of engagement and coordination between various stakeholders, particularly members of staff.

The AOD-Northumbria partnership, like most TNE partnerships, is regulated in the UK by the awarding institute through the creation of partnership agreements. Like the operation manual mentioned in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.3), the documents used for forging transnational academic alliances focus on "defining the respective roles and responsibilities of each partner, as well as outlining financial and general regulations, against a pre-defined definition and purpose for the partnership" (Keay, May and O' Mahony 2014, p. 256). Partnership agreements focus on the product of TNE, that is institutional roles, what is delivered and by whom rather than the process of facilitation. The concept of a community of practice is useful as a framework for analysing the quality of a transnational partnership because it emphasises the process, as well as the product of TNE.

5.2 Evaluating Communities of Practice

Wenger's concept of a community of practice can be applied to diverse groups of practitioners. While this chapter is focusing on a community of transnational academic practitioners, Tovey, a British academic invested in design pedagogy has used the concept to argue that students engaged in design education are motivated by the possibility of being a part of their communities of professional practice (2015, p. 38). During interviews with members of academic and management staff at AOD and Northumbria University, I used Tovey's summary of Wenger's features of a well-formed community of practice as a point of reference to discuss whether, as TNE practitioners, they felt engaged in a well-formed community of transnational academic practice. Wenger's indicators, as summarised in a list by Tovey (2015, p. 39) are:

1. sustained mutual relationships – harmonious or conflictual
2. shared ways of engaging in doing things together
3. the rapid flow of information and propagation of innovation
4. absence of introductory preambles, as if conversations and interactions were merely the continuation of an ongoing process
5. very quick set-up of a problem to be discussed
6. substantial overlap in participants' descriptions of who belongs
7. knowing what others know, what they can do and how they can contribute to an enterprise
8. mutually defining identities
9. the ability to assess the appropriateness of actions and products
10. specific tools, representations and other artefacts
11. local lore, shared stories, inside jokes, knowing laughter
12. jargon and shortcuts to communication
13. certain styles recognised as displaying membership
14. a shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective on the world.

While some participants reflected on each feature individually, others responded to the features they felt were not reflected in their relationship with various stakeholders in

Newcastle (Figures 26 and 27). Overall, the discussions with participants in Sri Lanka and Newcastle led to diverse views which were often contradictory. On the one hand, some felt that both institutes shared a common perspective as institutes of design education (point 14). However, in terms of mutual engagement, as practitioners of a host institute, participants from AOD felt their sustained relationship and engagement with Northumbria University, as an institution, was one which involved more conflict than harmony (points 1 to 12).

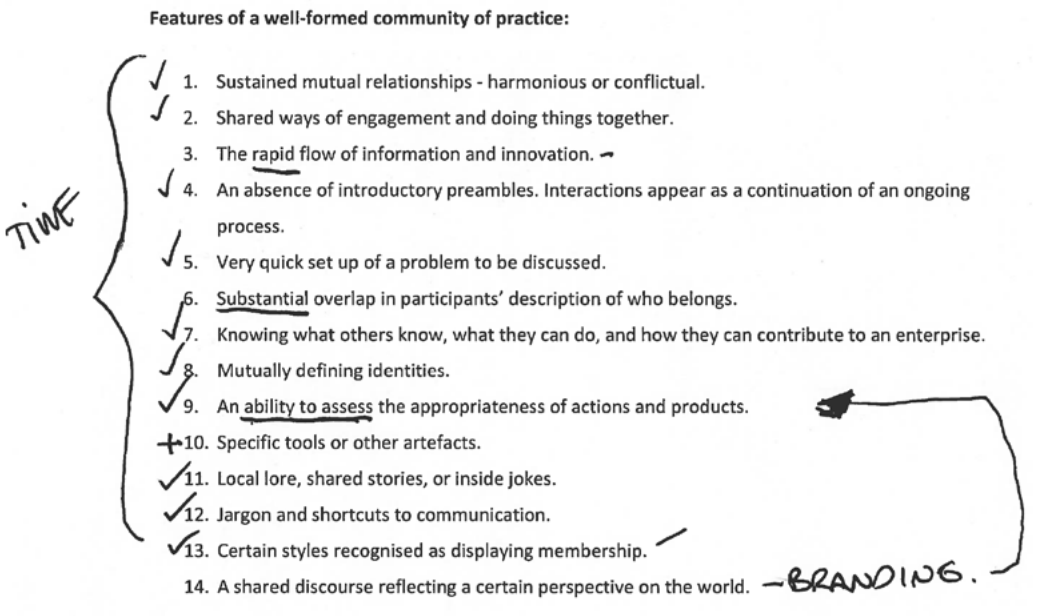


Figure 26 Hugo's discussion notes. Interview, Colombo, February 2019.

The following opinions from members of the graphic design department reflect a positive outlook in terms of feeling part of a community. Although no longer part of the academic team during my field research, Hugo had spent many years leading the graphic design department at AOD. Reflecting on points 1 through 5, he felt there had been shared ways of engagement and continuous interaction with his link tutors in Newcastle when he was facilitating the programme,

> I think the exchange between Northumbria, particularly for me, was meeting the other programme leaders and other faculty and exchanging ideas and telling them our problems and getting advice on how they solved things over there and how we could do things here. Some of them (the link tutors) had come here a lot to be able to start understanding the context. That was really good, the sharing of experiences (Hugo, Interview, February 19, 2019).

Emma, who was in charge of the graphic design department at AOD during the field research agreed with Hugo. Continuous interaction and having a rapid flow of information depended on who was a department's link to Newcastle, "our link tutor is not hands-off and gets involved if you ask him to. And they are very responsive and every time I go there, the training aspect is really good. Living here for the lecturers, it is such a good opportunity to refresh and get trained because it can be quite still, just being here" (Emma, Interview, February 17, 2019).

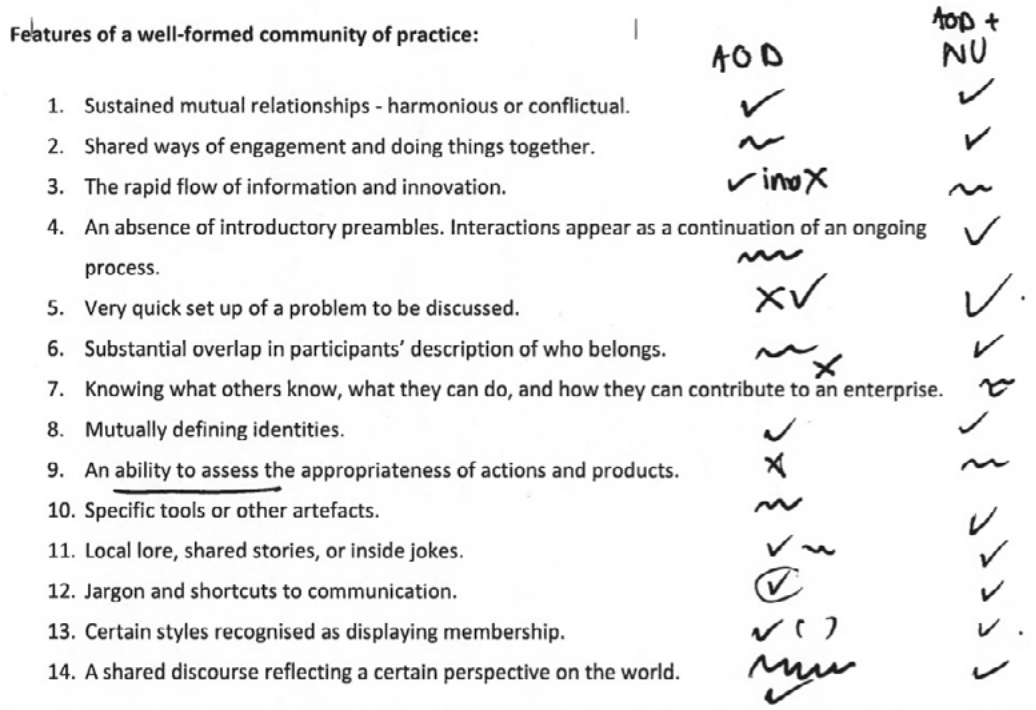


Figure 27 Emma's discussion notes. Interview, Colombo, February 2019.

Mary and Claire had worked together at AOD in the design foundation and fashion department and share over a decade of experience teaching the Northumbria design curriculum in Colombo between them. They felt AOD partnering with Northumbria University was a good match because they shared a common perspective of the world. According to Mary, "Northumbria University's pairing with AOD is correct in terms of what we want our student to achieve and what they want their students to achieve," which is to create graduates who are employment ready for the design industry (Interview, February 12, 2019). As a graduate of Northumbria University, Claire felt aligned to Northumbria's perspective as a design school to prepare students for industry success and adopting that for AOD, but she also acknowledged there was conflict within their sustained relationship (point 1),

> I don't mind the conflict, because how can you expect the lecturers in Northumbria to understand exactly the DNA of a brand that you're trying to build here— a Northumbria brand in the context of Sri Lanka (Interview, February 13, 2019).

Claire's point helps highlight a fundamental issue in the AOD-Northumbria partnership in terms of the everyday practice and barrier in establishing a transnational community of practice at an institutional level. Most members of staff at AOD felt that Northumbria University did not have an accurate grasp of the contextual reality of AOD, its students, and staff because the franchise system assumes that the Northumbria University design curriculum was universally applicable. While there was engagement amongst the two cohorts of staff in Newcastle and Colombo, the premise of universal applicability resulted in several points of friction. The following narratives exemplify why a lack of shared understanding around issues of student assessment, poor interpersonal communication, and having two institutions in a state of flux without a repertoire of resources for ensuring continuity result in a poorly formed community of practice.

5.3 Narratives of Friction

In her ethnographic research on global connections of international trade, Tsing sees universal knowledge as knowledge which moves across localities and cultures with the mission to "form bridges, roads, and channels of circulation" (Tsing 2005, p. 7). Universal knowledge is not constant, it is hybrid, transient, and constantly reforming, with contextually specific knowledge adding to universal channels of circulation by widening rather than interrupting its flow (ibid.). Tsing provides the examples of a transnational group of scientists with common goals overcoming their national politics to forge universal environmental policies and standards. In this example of joint enterprise, the scope of universality is in outlook rather than practical execution. According to Tsing, "those who claim to be in touch with the universal are notoriously bad at seeing the limits and exclusions of their knowledge" (2005, p. 8). Engaged universal knowledge travels across differences and encounters cultural friction; through friction, universal knowledge encounters localities and becomes effective, but it can never fulfil the promise of universality by taking over the world (ibid., stress added). Friction makes global connection powerful and effective by grounding it in contextual specificities, but it also challenges the notion that global power works smoothly, like a "well-oiled machine" (Tsing 2005, p. 4).

The term friction lends itself to illuminate conflicts in transnational academic practice in the following narratives. Friction helps demonstrate how a universal notion, such as a British design curriculum, is never successful in being the same everywhere. The narrative data shows, for example, how notions of style and aesthetics play out in specific times and places differently through friction. The term also exemplifies how members of staff challenge the standard application of a transnational curriculum by using their individual autonomy and collective agency. As illustrated in Chapter 4, TNE systems require collaboration amongst various stakeholders. However, collaboration does not involve a "simple sharing of information" (Tsing, 2005, p.13). Education is facilitated through the friction in this particular partnership as it helps the travelling knowledge reform. The following narratives exemplify how a design curriculum evolves to become engaged knowledge through conflict and frictional encounters.

5.3.1 Online Assessment, Moderation, and Validation

One point of friction stated repeatedly by staff at AOD was moderation. The process of moderation involved staff at AOD sharing samples of students work with staff at Northumbria University to check for consistency in application of assessment criteria and final grades amongst the cohort of students studying the curriculum in Newcastle and Colombo. The first concern regarding moderation was assessing projects from Sri Lanka from a Western lens. Mary, as a British designer trained in the UK with extensive travel experiences around Asia, felt design academics based in England might have a limited vision for the scope of marketable aesthetics and taste, which can hamper their assessment of transnational students' studio practice,

> Recently, I had a discussion with Northumbria over a specific student whom we marked as a seventy… for this garment by a level 5 student. We sent it to Northumbria University, and the module tutor said – what's the market? It was a very like glamourous evening dress. So, then I had to go back and say

> the market is Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar; that is the market. Or Sri Lanka even. In the end, they got a seventy. I know who would buy it. I can see the person in it. If someone has never been to Sri Lanka or doesn't ever travel to South East Asia, or Saudi Arabia, or the United Arab Emirates then they're not really going to understand that (Interview, February 12, 2019).

In addition to accepting diverse design aesthetics and influences in student work, Mary felt there should be flexibility and leeway in the moderation process to account for the prior skills and knowledge of students at the host institute,

> If a lecturer has no context of AOD and then they're marking student work, I think that's really awful. For example, the dissertation for our students, we have one first-class honours student a year, if that. Last year we had none, and not all of it is down to the dissertation, but a big part of it is down to the written part. English is not their first language; referencing, they have not been taught for their whole lives. So, a little bit of leeway here and there, and a little bit of understanding in those contexts would ideally help us (Interview, February 12, 2019).

The moderation of student work used to involve link tutors travelling from Newcastle to Colombo and examining projects first-hand. All members of staff felt those trips provided a richer experience for the moderators by giving them a glimpse of AOD's situated context. During my field research, moderation had moved to an online format with students digitally documenting their work and sharing files for external assessment in addition to submitting their work physically for assessment in-house. Mary spoke of having to ask students to photograph work for external assessment and the challenges which arose when students did a poor job of it. As a programme leader, she felt an added burden of having to vet the process of student documentation to ensure fair moderation.

As a lecturer and academic administrator at AOD, Cole agreed that the move to digital moderation was a chafing-point for AOD. According to him, it went against the initial partnership agreement, which included internal evaluation and moderation where staff from Northumbria would have annual in-person contact with students and staff in Colombo. Given the iterative process of design practice discussed in Chapter 4, student work created during studio practice involves an extensive process of learning by doing, which does not necessarily lend itself to digital documentation. As part of the in-person moderation, link tutors would have discussions with students to understand their process of reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983) and their design values, being user-centred or participatory, for example. Such design values guide the design process but are hard to visualise.

Online assessment dehumanised the moderation process according to Cole. He described the current system as a "a school which is evaluated entirely through the internet" (Interview, February 14, 2019) which was unfair for validating projects designed for tactile interaction,

> Our ability to digitally *packetise* and transfer information that is as relatable as

> the work that was done over here decides whether the marks of our students are considered valid. Which is particularly troublesome for people who create things of texture and dimension… I question whether handmade development books can be really transferred that way? We have a system for it, but I don't think it's the same as looking through a book, and I know it's not the same as looking through a book and talking to the person who made it about how their project developed. That's the part I think we really miss (Cole, Interview, February 14, 2019).

In a transnational setting like AOD, academic practice is stretched across geographic distance which is an obvious hurdle for communication and relationship building. All participants interviewed felt the annual academic trips, of AOD staff to Newcastle and Northumbria staff to Colombo, helped the community of transnational practitioners establish their joint enterprise and develop mutually defining identities to facilitate a better TNE experience.

In light of the recent decision by management at Northumbria University to abandon the annual staff visits, Cole believes that the AOD- Northumbria partnership was more closely aligned to Wenger's definition of a community of practice during the initial years of the franchise partnership,

> It was the physical visitation. There was a lot of physical exchange between employees, and when they came here, they taught seminars and worked with student groups. They stayed for longer and were a part of the things they did; the examiners were a known factor to the students. Now they are faceless boogeymen who are going to cut their marks. They've never seen them before; they just know the name of the person; spoken in fear and whispers in dark corners (Interview, February 14, 2019).

From the perspective of a link tutor in Newcastle, echoing Mary and Cole's concerns around the fairness of a purely online programme validation process, George had given up his role as a link tutor in the partnership with AOD when it moved to a digital format,

> Well, that was one of the things I could have continued but when it became very digitally focused and you weren't physically visiting the institution, it was a very dry experience, to be honest. And it never really worked, to be honest, to get a sense of the student experience there remotely and they realised that. The university realised that. So, I think this year there will be a formal arrangement where the staff members will go out on a once or twice a year basis. To be confirmed, but it's definitely going to be a much more physical kind of relationship like we had before (Interview, September 18, 2019).

The decision to move to an online validation process does optimise the facilitation of a franchise programme for Northumbria University since they save on time and staff travel expenses. However, from the perspective of AOD, Cole questioned whether having an exclusively online moderation process was worth the money paid to Northumbria University since a purely digital interaction with their peers in Northum-

bria not only created an unequal process of student assessment, but it also limited their engagement in joint activities and building better relationships to advance their shared academic practice.

5.3.2 Interpersonal Communication

The HEA study on using communities of practice as a theoretical framework for creating more effective TNE partnerships argues that TNE processes could improve by promoting shared responsibility for developing a community with a mutually developed repertoire of resources to seek contextually appropriate solutions (Keay, May and O' Mahony, 2014). To facilitate this type of mutual engagement, communication between members of a community of practice is critical. Since the AOD-Northumbria partnership had moved to a mostly online format, the engagement between members was limited, leading to strained relationships. Cole felt there "has to be some amount of actual interpersonal contact with these people (in Newcastle) for us to be considered partners or work comrades" (Interview, February 14, 2019). He gave the example of having to defuse a frictional situation between a link tutor in Newcastle and one of the heads of department at AOD who had never spoken to one another and communicated exclusively over email,

> His (the AOD head of department's) English is Hemmingway-esque in its short and brutal nature. He doesn't flower the ends of things because his comfort level with English is all right, but when he speaks, it is choppy, noun-verb-pronoun, and they took offence to his tone. I'm sure if they actually heard him say those things, they would realise that that's his personality and how he sounds. It's never mean-spirited; he doesn't use a lot of extra words because it's not his favourite language. That kind of thing could have been readily defused by having more contact (Cole, Interview, February 14, 2019).

Misunderstanding from a lack of interpersonal communication can have significant consequences for staff and students in a host institute, as in this case, the head of department at AOD was negotiating the moderation of the students' grades.

The everyday practice of facilitating the Northumbria programme involves communication over distance with e-mail being the official channel of contact. When people at both ends of an email chain were responsive, like in the case of Emma and Hugo who had engaged link tutors in Newcastle, it led to the absence of introductory preambles. For others, former relationships with staff in Newcastle meant they bypassed official channels of communication to ensure a rapid flow of information,

> Our programme leaders, once they get someone to send them their phone number have just started directly WhatsApp video-calling their opposite numbers at NU. Which works, I would say, one week faster than the official channels that any of that information would have gone through. The caveat to that conversation is always that everyone has to pretend that that is not the way everybody found out. I think that the system has been slow to adapt to the tools (Cole, Interview, February 14, 2019).

For others, the lack of responsiveness or focus on shared ways of engagement was a

source of friction in their everyday practice as exemplified in the following narrative,

> I wrote to them (link tutors) last December, no, October or November? I wrote to them with all my briefs and said – these are the briefs that I've done, please look over them and understand them, because I started in this role (of programme leader) halfway through the year. The briefs were inconsistent, and the module guides were incorrect. There were some module guides from years ago that had been given to the students, and it was all just a little bit of a mess. So, they (the administrators at AOD) said to make sure that everything is approved (Mary, Interview, February 12, 2019).

In addition to concerns with outdated module guides, there were concerns regarding facilities that AOD did not have to deliver a course, knitting equipment, for example. Regarding a response to the issues raised, Mary received answers to about half of her concerns and received no feedback on her project briefs. At the time, she had dealt with the issues on an ad hoc basis without any consequence. In the past, Claire and Mary's department had been presented with a technical extenuating circumstance (TEC) where all students had ten marks added to their final grade because the moderators at Northumbria felt AOD staff had asked for too many deliverables in a particular module. Although the TEC favoured the students in that instance, staff at AOD felt they that Northumbria had reduced the number of deliverables for the module because of a lack of facilities in Newcastle,

> They have restrictions on staffing or equipment. Staffing, they would take out parts of the curriculum because they do not have enough time do it and we've kept it, and then they start saying we've given too much work to the students. Two years ago, it wasn't too much work, but now it's too much work because you don't have a sewing room available for your final year projects because you've recruited three hundred students rather than a hundred and twenty. Those are very frustrating things. We have had to fight for things which influence the curriculum (Claire, Interview, February 13, 2019).

This type of friction made staff at AOD feel undermined in their efforts to deliver a contextually relevant educational experience. The franchise system required approval for curricular changes from their link tutors in Northumbria, but a lack of communication or responsiveness made AOD staff take decisions autonomously but at the risk of being called out for procedural errors in the form of TECs.

5.3.3 Institutional Flux

The design of institutions involves defining roles and the distribution of authority and the creation of a formalised structure. Wenger argues (1998, p. 244) that institutions have dual structures, one designed and the other emergent. The emergent structure of an institution is determined by its communities of practice and unless they are aligned to the formal institutional structure, they can create tension or, as displayed in the following narratives, friction. Therefore, any organisation is a meeting of two sources of structure, the designed structure of an institution, and the emergent structure of practice (ibid.).

For example, an institution can provide a system of procedures, processes, and contracts, but a community of practice can pick and choose when to incorporate institutional artefacts into their practice and based on their specific situations, when to follow the formal systems, and when to ignore them (Wenger, 1998). AOD and Northumbria University's management team, for example, have an operation manual which details the financial management and facilitation of the franchised partnership. Link tutors from Northumbria University's School of Design share the curriculum, including module guides and project briefs with the programme leaders at AOD. The programme leaders then adapt the content to suit their specific situation, sometimes in collaboration with their link tutors, at other times, based on their agency to overcome friction.

Even though the AOD-Northumbria partnership has defined roles such as partnership managers, link tutors, and programme leaders which provide a formal structure for the distribution of authority and management of the partnership, the emergent structure of facilitating the partnership is one in flux. An obvious challenge in developing sustained relationships in the AOD-Northumbria community of practice is the fact that members of staff at both institutions are continually in flux. For example, Hugo mentioned the academic team at AOD constantly had new people come in because of low staff retention, "I think to have a well-formed community it takes a long time. At AOD, retention (of staff) is not very high so I think it would be very difficult for someone to join the community" (Interview, February 19, 2019).

Hugo's comment is demonstrated by the fact that since completing the field research in Colombo in 2019, the seven research participants who were actively employed at AOD and played key roles in facilitating the transnational partnership have either left the institute or taken on different academic roles at a reduced capacity. Being a private design institute, the academic team at AOD was relatively small with limited institutional roles. Emma's previous comment (section 5.2) which described working at AOD as being *quite still* also alludes to limited opportunities for professional development and career growth for academic staff teaching a transnational curriculum.

Cole, on the other hand, spoke of institutional flux in terms of link-tutors or partnership administrators at Northumbria being replaced without preamble,

> The partnership director turned into another guy on me two weeks ago in one email. It was like– okay, I'm leaving until June, this is your new guy. Bye! With no expectation that I would have any concern about changing my function with this person, that we had been working on multiple partnerships over the last year or so to wholly another person who I've never met before (Interview, February 14, 2019).

Cole's experience with the partnership director highlights the institutional expectation of TNE partnerships being transactional with a focus on academic validation which can be a mechanical process not requiring mutual engagement. His comment also suggests an institutional structure which values procedures over social interaction.

George, in his experience of being a link tutor, agreed that the management of TNE partnerships could become mechanical with roles changing hands amongst people who were often unaware of the everyday practice of facilitating a course,

> So, what you end up with is somebody with a programme, I guess this is what happened last time, someone comes out to Sri Lanka, and they're normally an executive member, or they have some kind of 'international' responsibility. They come out with the programme that we have given them, and we give them a bit of an overview, and they come out and say– what do you think? Do you think that's something you can do, or we can sell you? And then somebody else who is not a lecturer on the other side says yes, we'll do that. And then there are a lot of modifications which are done throughout that experience. So, it's very different from what could happen in an ideal world, isn't it?

Based on the narratives shared by staff members at AOD, it is evident that staff commitment and motivation at a TNE host institute involved in the facilitation of the partnership is more important than the articulation of a partnership agreement and validation procedures. TNE partnerships need to recognise the agency and autonomy of staff at host institutions as they create emergent structures within franchise programmes. The emergent structures developed in response to points of friction are innovations in academic and professional practice as they are essential in easing the flow of educational services travelling across borders.

5.4 TNE as a Form of Neo-colonial Management

The relationship between institutions and everyday practice is one of "negotiated alignment" (Wenger 1998, p. 245); that is, an alignment which is never secure and must be continuously negotiated. The narratives shared by members of AOD staff show how managing friction through interactions across distance can lead to harmonious or conflictual relationships based on the quality of communication between members of a transnational community of practice. For many academic staff members, frictional encounters lead to a stronger drive for departmental autonomy and individual agency, especially when the organisational relationship led to conflict.

A study by Ling et al. (2014) on academic management and leadership in transnational education explored whether certain Australian TNE models involve a set of unequal relationships between local academics in host institutes and academics situated in the "home" campus. Although the study is from Australian TNE managers' perspective, it draws parallels to the themes explored in this research; specifically, confronting organisational relationships in franchised programmes. The study found that a high degree of home campus decision making limits managers on transnational host campuses to administrative decisions rather than substantial academic ones, limiting their ability to demonstrate academic leadership and potentially limiting their career opportunities. Home campus decision making is sometimes seen as neo-colonialism by those engaged with facilitating the programme at the local level (Ling et al., 2014, p. 54).

The term neo-colonialism, as defined in Chapter 2, refers to former colonial powers

and new emerging superpowers having a direct influence in the economies and cultures of other nations, including former colonies through instruments of indirect control (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 162). Neo-colonial control is achieved through international monetary bodies, multinational corporations, and educational and cultural non-governmental organisations (ibid.). In the context of globalisation, neo-colonialism is associated less with the influence of the former colonial powers. Instead, it signifies the inability of developing economies to develop an independent economic and political identity under the pressures of globalisation (ibid.).

In the context of TNE partnerships, the designed structure raises questions about the appropriateness of management and the exercise of power in overseeing the process of validation by people based at the home campus since they are based in a foreign context. This type of indirect management and exercise of power can be styled as neo-colonial (Ling et al. 2014, p. 49) since a high degree of home campus control may result in learning, teaching activities, and assignments being unfamiliar to the experiences of students in transnational settings.

In an attempt to define different partnership structures, Ling et al. defined four models for TNE categorised on management arrangements: home campus curriculum control; limited transnational campus curriculum control; distributed curriculum control; and transnational campus curriculum control (2014, p. 50). According to the study, the type of arrangement adopted for a TNE programme varied between programmes and units of study within programmes; they also varied over time with changes in staff. The responsibility of local staff in decision making and facilitating TNE increased when local academics had more experience in teaching a unit of study (Ling et al., 2014).

Among the four models of TNE management (Table 4), distributed control was considered to be the most liberal where the sending institute's role was in prescribing learning outcomes which were to be attained by students at the host institute and moderating student work after internal assessment. This format was viewed positively by academics in sending institutes who saw it as an opportunity for mutual benefit by sharing responsibility of curating the curriculum. From the host institutes perspectives, academic managers felt this model enabled them to claim experience in designing the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment (Ling et al., 2014, p. 54).

The study concluded that an approach based on students attaining equivalent learning outcomes from their study on local campuses might constitute the most satisfactory relationship amongst TNE partners (Ling et al., 2014). An objective to achieve equivalent learning outcomes enables learning activities to be locally designed and for assessment to be tailored, acknowledging the differing environments of home campus and transnational education students (ibid.).

In the context of AOD and Northumbria University, there is an official TNE partnership manager, but the departmental link tutors' role comes closer to the role of "academic manager" used in the study by Ling et al. (2014, p. 48). Based on the narrative data shared by academic staff, the community of practitioners at AOD were already working along the lines of a system of distributed control (Table 4) since

	Benefits for Institutes Providing TNE Services	Benefits for Institutes Hosting TNE Services
1.TNE Provider Control	• Managers can demonstrate leadership in curriculum design and implementation in a transnational education context and cross-cultural experience. • The management load may limit opportunities for career advancement through research and publication.	• Allows academic staff to demonstrate teachingability but not management.
2. Limited TNE Host Control	• Managers can demonstrate leadership in curriculum design and implementation in a transnational education context. • Managers may be relieved of some of the assessment load of Model 1, but the workload may limit opportunities for career advancement through research and publication.	• Academic staff may be able to cite some contribution to curriculum design, learning and teaching activities and assessment.
3. Distributed Control	• Managers can demonstrate some understanding of curriculum design and implementation in a transnational education context. • Managers are relieved of some of the responsibility of curriculum design and student assessment, providing more opportunities for other career development.	• Academic staff may be able to cite management and leadership in curriculum design, and assessment.
4.TNE Host Control	• Managers have limited opportunity for demonstrating an understanding of curriculum design and implementation in a transnational education context. • They have more opportunities for other career development activities.	• Academic staff can cite management and leadership in curriculum design, and assessment.

Table 4 Models of TNE Management. Adapted from (Ling et al., 2014, p. 53).

academic staff made changes to the design curriculum and vetted the assessment and moderation process to account for the experience and needs of their students. Mary's reflection on her autonomy as an academic tutor reflects this point,

> In terms of like the module outcomes, the module definitions, the notional working hours, all those kinds of things are the same, and the taught hours are the same. But we have more flexibility within our partnership to write our own briefs or adapt the briefs to what we need. So, yeah, we do have input (Interview, February 12, 2019).

As reflected in Mary and Cole's previous comments, academic staff at AOD also felt that link tutors in Newcastle had a limited understanding of how the Northumbria curriculum is implemented in a TNE context; this opinion also aligns with a model of "distributed control" (Table 4). In contrast, the official franchise partnership assumes models of "TNE provider control" and "limited TNE host control" of management with Northumbria University. The institution providing the curriculum is meant to take control of its design, implementation, and assessment in the transnational context. This mismatch in the institutional structure with the emergent structure of practice results in the AOD academic team's work being overlooked.

5.5 Navigating the Boundaries and Margins of Practice

On the one hand, the staff at AOD change curricular content and adapt modules to their local context to anticipate or manage friction in the facilitation of the Northumbria design programme. However, this work occurs in the margins of the designed TNE structure as it is not defined in institutional procedures or processes. Wenger (1998) describes the edge of institutional practice as boundaries. In the context of communities of practice, as places of coordination, boundaries play a vital role in structuring the negotiation of meaning (ibid., p. 254). By focusing on the boundaries of practice, one can anticipate problems of coordination or understand issues of miscommunication (ibid.).

If an activity is overlooked or not valued because it is not part of an established structure, a boundary is the place where it can fall into the margins. At the same time, the margins, which Wenger refers to as "cracks", can become a locus of activity where new interplays of experience can lead to radical new knowledge (Wenger, 1998 p. 254). The navigation and negotiation of friction makes the margins of the AOD-Northumbria community of practice such a locus of activity. These margins can also be seen as a Third Space (Bhabha, 2004). According to Bhabha, the *Third Space* is an in-between space at "the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (2004, p. 2).

Third spaces are created through cultural engagement, which can be antagonistic or affiliative (ibid.). Bhabha has used the concept of a Third Space to analyse postcolonial literature such as the work of V.S. Naipaul and Joseph Conrad as "it is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance" (2004, p. 56) as the translation and negotiation between the coloniser and the colonised creates hybridity and a fusion of the two cultures. In the context of TNE partnerships

in postcolonial places, the *Third Space* is a metaphoric place or a margin where hybrid academic practices are negotiated to facilitate a better TNE experience.

The academic practice of staff at AOD involves the design (or design intervention) of a British system of education where curriculum and education services travel across national boundaries with the promise of universal application or value for their receiver. Their academic practice challenges the notion of a universally applicable design curriculum and brings to focus contextual subjectivities. In this case, an institute hosting a British design curriculum becomes a "contradictory place of universality in the face of the particular"(Bhabha 2011, p.12), aligning with postcolonial discourses which decry the universalising tendency of Western knowledge as a negative and enduring legacy of imperialism and former colonial empires (Chilisa, 2012). The term design, in this context of learning, is defined by Wenger as "a systematic, planned, and reflexive colonisation of time and space in the service of an undertaking" (1998, p. 228). This definition of design includes the production of artefacts as well as social processes of instruction.

Within the scope of designing learning and educational systems, the narratives shared by members of staff who facilitate TNE show that those in positions of management and power can design work processes but not practices. Organisations such as the British Council, UK's Quality Assurance Agency and the UN have defined diverse types of TNE systems and designed procedures of accountability for communities of practice to live by. Nevertheless, they cannot design the practices that will emerge in response to such institutional systems. In the case of franchise programmes, the notion of emergent structures and negotiation within the community of practice are not accounted for; instead, they are designed as systems of external control.

Discussions with academic staff suggest that the mutual relationship with Northumbria at an institutional level would always be conflictual because of systemic hierarchies in the designed structure which do not support an equal partnership,

> You would see people at AOD pushback on Northumbria when Northumbria would be like, listen, this is our curriculum, you are franchising our programme so we can say and do what we want… and AOD would push back and say fair enough, but this is our school. I think it should be egalitarian, but because we are purchasing their curriculum, essentially, there will always be a hierarchy (Hugo, Interview, February 19, 2019).

Mary felt the objective of TNE was focused on financial transactions rather than developing a joint enterprise, and therefore could not be considered in terms of an academic partnership to further TNE practice,

> The Northumbria University pairing with AOD is correct in terms of what we want our student to achieve and what they want their students to achieve. But I don't really see it as a partnership. I see it very much as a transaction. We get the certificate from them, and that is it, really. I don't think partnership is the correct term, it is a transaction… a transaction-ship (Interview, February 12, 2019).

Her opinion was echoed in a recent article by the Times Higher Education; the vice-chancellor for international development at Coventry University, David Pilsbury, states that TNE was "utterly transactional" with British universities engaging in it for a quick financial return (Bothwell, 2020). At the same time, Pilsbury advises British universities to focus on TNE partnerships and add value to such services in order to charge higher fees for TNE services (ibid.).

5.6 The Value of Communities of Practice in Facilitating TNE

Communities of practice are organisational assets because they are the social fabric of learning within organisations (Wenger 1998, p. 253). However, because they are not formal entities, they are often overlooked as a resource. Based on Wenger's theory of social learning, for TNE partnerships to overcome inherent challenges, renew their practices, and improve teaching and learning, there must be an institutional focus on fostering the development of implicit communities of practice.

Regardless of whether they are formally reified as a transnational community of practice, AOD and Northumbria University's mutual engagement to facilitate a franchised design programme creates an implicit community of academic practice. Wenger (1998) states that communities of practice have always existed in realised and unrealised forms in the context of design for learning. They are not a new form of designed, institutional units; instead, communities of practice are about "learning as a living experience" (ibid., p. 229). The narratives shared by the research participants show that the lived experiences of TNE staff have been overlooked by those with the power to define institutional structures since current TNE structures are rigid while practitioners' value "more of an organic approach" (Mary, Interview, February 12, 2019).

Wenger concedes that the localised perspective of a community of practice is not inherently superior and no community can fully design its own learning (1998, p. 234). Design for learning is not about specification, it is "a boundary object that functions as a communication artefact around which communities of practice can negotiate their contribution, their position, and their alignment" (ibid., p. 235). This chapter does not glorify the local by focusing on the community of practice formed by AOD and Northumbria University's staff. Instead, the narratives reveal how such translocal mutual engagement is an important space for negotiating friction, developing practices, and forming identity through complex local and global interactions.

One can attempt to institutionalise a community of practice, but unless members engage with the structure, it will remain indifferent to its institutionalisation. Instead, communities of practice need to be recognised and supported by the institutions in which they are based. Wenger argues that supporting a community of practice does not require much in terms or organisational resources— an occasion to meet, time set aside to do things together, institutional room to take initiative, and travel money (1998, p. 251). The franchise model of TNE does not account for the setup of such organisational resources, which in addition to creating friction, can stagnate academic practice,

> I think the first year we partnered with Northumbria everything was really exciting, but over time, as we keep delivering the same thing, it has become

> repetitive. If you take the VA600 module, I don't think a single sentence has changed since 2013. I know it is basic research methodology, but then there are changes that have happened in the world since 2013 which should have been added in their presentations. So, people might get fed up with having to teach the same thing (Amanda, Interview, February 18, 2019).

The numerous narratives in this chapter and the previous one show that even without having supportive institutional structures, several members of AOD's academic team manifested their professional agency to navigate friction and facilitate a better learning experience for their students. Rather than being disruptive, navigating friction is crucial to facilitate a smooth flow of TNE services. However, since this work happens in the margins of practice, it leads to a sustained relationship of conflict within the transnational community of practice.

To support communities of practice, Wenger suggests creating an infrastructure of engagement which includes facilities of mutuality, competence, and continuity (1998, p. 237). Mutuality includes physical or virtual spaces that allow for extended time for interactions, joint tasks, and peripherality which are casual encounters or peripheral participation which can act as entry points for new members. Competence can involve occasions for applying knowledgeability, devising solutions, or negotiating joint enterprise; that is devising artefacts or discourses that support competence. Continuity can involve the documentation and creation of repositories of information and participative memory through long term engagement (ibid.).

An infrastructure for engagement has the potential to develop more equitable TNE partnerships by acknowledging that the value of such partnerships, in addition to the trade of design education services, is one of mutual legitimisation. George saw the value of TNE in promoting a university's brand worldwide. Formal connections with institutions in other parts of the world positively reflect Northumbria University's maturity and coming of age as an academic institution. By franchising their curriculum, Northumbria University is proving that they "have something to say and have something to support" (George, Interview, September 18, 2019).

Claire defined AOD and Northumbria University's pairing as an arranged marriage where the partners are mutually advantageous in terms of building institutional reputation through quality assurance,

> The marriage must be the right marriage. In a lot of cases, people will just open schools; even the European schools will open with any old partner. I will say that Northumbria has been very careful, and their partnerships are fully franchised, so they say it's Northumbria in Sri Lanka (Interview, February 13, 2019).

Encouraging the delivery of a franchised design programme as a joint enterprise amongst a community of practitioners would not only benefit the facilitation of TNE from an institutional perspective, but it would also allow staff to further their academic practice. The framework of a community of practice can affect educational practices along three dimensions; internally, they affect the design of educational

practices that ground learning in practice based on disciplines. A community of practice developed around teaching design will be different from teaching biology, for example. Externally, a community of practice can connect students to professional practice through peripheral forms of participation in communities outside the classroom walls. Finally, a community of practice can affect students over a lifetime by assisting lifelong learning by organising communities focused on topics beyond their formal education (Wenger and Wenger-Trayner 2015, p. 5).

An infrastructure of engagement can encourage members of staff to explore TNE systems beyond the delivery of a franchised curriculum towards supporting students to form identities within their communities of learning and design practice. Wenger describes this as approaching education design not as a source of learning but "a resource to a learning community" by facilitating opportunities for student engagement (1998, p. 271). As stated earlier (section 5.2), British academic Tovey (2015) uses Wenger's concept of a community of practice to argue that students studying design aspire to become members of their communities of professional practice. To fulfil these aspirations, design education must give students "a sense of the possible trajectories available in various communities" (Wenger 1998, p. 272); that is, explore who they are and where there can go as effective design practitioners. The following chapter explores the value of transnational education from students' perspectives to evaluate whether their TNE experience facilitates access to their professional communities of design practice.

Ch 6 The Politics of a Passport to Design Practice

Walking around the busy streets of central Colombo, one is likely to stumble upon hole in the wall copy shops with names such as PRO Digital Printing (Figure 28) advertising high-quality printing services such as *graphic designing*. Based on discussions with AOD students and alumni, these ubiquitous shops which offer everyday services such as photocopying and four-colour digital printing have limited the average Sri Lankan's understanding of the scope of graphic design to something akin to using software like Adobe Photoshop to prepare files for print,

> I think in shops where they have photocopying and printing, they have Graphic Design in a bold font right there, so people assume that is what graphic designers do; work at a small shop behind a computer (Student Workshop, February 14, 2019).

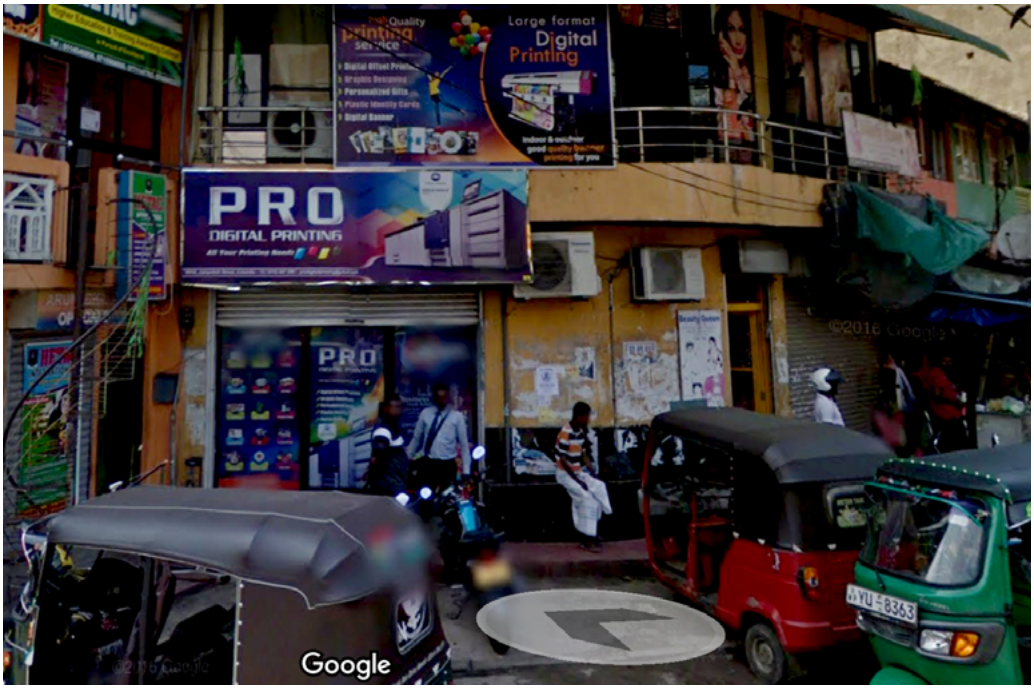


Figure 28 Street View of Pro Digital Printing on Ratnam Road, Colombo, Google 2020.

Designers design: in the discipline of design, there is greater emphasis on doing rather than "being a repository of specialist knowledge" (Tovey 2015, p. 37). As discussed in Chapter 4, the professional practice of designers involves designerly ways of thinking and doing, and design education facilitates the learning of this type of design knowledge. As evidenced in the previous chapters, the graphic design department of Northumbria University's School of Design has adopted an apprentice system of learning-by-doing with a focus on professional design practice. Tovey, a British academic in product and industrial design with a research focus on design pedagogy, states that the objective of design education is in enabling students to gain entry to their communities of professional practice (Tovey, 2015). This objective of design education aligns with AOD and Design Corp's aim of training Sri Lankan students with the skills and agency required for professional design practice to expand or grow the local creative industry (discussed in Chapters 1, 2, and 4).

This project explores two types of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). The

previous chapter used Wenger's framework of a community of practice to make the case that franchise partnerships hold the potential to establish transnational communities of academic practice that can push forward design pedagogy and counter the current standard of one-way transfers of knowledge. The value of a British design education in Sri Lanka was explored from the perspective of stakeholders who facilitate the academic franchise. The second community of practice being explored is the community of professional design practitioners through the lens of stakeholders who, as tuition-paying students and graduates, are consumers and products of a transnational design education. The objective here is to answer the research question— *how does a TNE experience in design education provide access to communities of design practice?*

As stakeholders receiving a British design education in a different context and practising outside Britain, how the local industry values the skills and expertise of AOD students and graduates is integral to understanding the value of their design education. Additionally, the discipline of design and the abilities of its practitioners are wide-ranging (Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2) , which divides the overall community of design into several groups. In the context of globalisation, these communities are further split globally and locally. This chapter assesses the institutional promise of an AOD-Northumbria educational experience providing students with "a highly respected design passport to work anywhere in the world" (AOD, 2021).

Tovey (2015, p. 37) states that for most design students, "the end goal is that of achieving a level of capability to function as designers in the professional world", and design education provides students with a "passport to practice" in the form of a portfolio to enter their respective communities of practice (ibid.). The notion of a passport to design practice, like most globalised systems, suggests an easy flow and movement of design practitioners and services across national borders. An easy flow of design services across national borders can be particularly true for graphic designers whose practice can be purely digital. However, as the experiences of AOD students and graduates reveals, Tovey's claim of design portfolios functioning as a passport which provides entry to communities of professional practice is not a standard system as it does not encapsulate the economic, political, and social context of a place. Such contextual specificities challenge Tovey's claim, particularly for design graduates and practitioners in Sri Lanka.

The narratives of students and graduates in this chapter uncover the "by-products of a graphic design education" (Bagchi 2021, p. 591). By by-products, I mean the soft skills in interpersonal communication, collaboration, and reflection developed by students studying graphic design to overcome various social and cultural challenges and develop a sense of agency which aids their professional practice. Comparing the lived experiences of engaging in professional practice between graphic design graduates in Sri Lanka to those in England demonstrates that all passports to design practice are not equal. By scrutinising the metaphorical concept of a passport to design practice with the political and geographic system of passports as objects that regulate mobility, I build the case that passports to practice design can perpetuate inequalities in educational and professional opportunities.

6.1 So, you use Photoshop?

During my field research in Colombo, a majority of my interactions with AOD students and alumni during workshops and focus groups were designed to elicit responses to Tovey's notion of a passport to design practice and imagine alternatives to a traditional design portfolio to help gain access to local or international communities of practice. Discussions on various topics such as the value of a design portfolio, the perception of design skills in the local industry, dream jobs, and identifying professional communities of practice provided a foreground to the exercise titled A Passport to Practice detailed in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.2 (Appendix 1.4). The focus group discussions and workshop outcomes provide several insights on the implications of having a restrictive social structure and a lack of institutional structure in Sri Lanka, which, as argued by Heskett (2015; Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2), can constrain the work of design practitioners.

First, several AOD students and alumni spoke of a local cultural climate that does not have the most favourable opinion of graphic design as a creative practice, which negatively impacts the perception of design as an educational discipline. One example mentioned several times was a social perception that the discipline of graphic design only involved using digital software, such as Photoshop, to create graphics. AOD alumni spoke of larger digital printing enterprises in Colombo exacerbating this public perception of the field by calling their desktop-publishing operators' graphic designers and offering three-month certificate courses in graphic design.

This narrow perception of the discipline, and a skewed understanding of the skills and abilities of graphic designers was demonstrated in a post on the AOD alumni Facebook group as seen in Figure 29. Elegance by Design specialises in the "design and manufacture of exclusive, personalised and hand-crafted wedding stationery," and wanted to hire applicants with a good understanding of *graphic designing* (Elegance by Design, 2020). Even though the post states AOD training as an added value, the knowledge of Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator appears to be the leading qualifier for the position. Given that AOD was founded in 2001, most AOD students and graduates would also fit the required age bracket advertised.

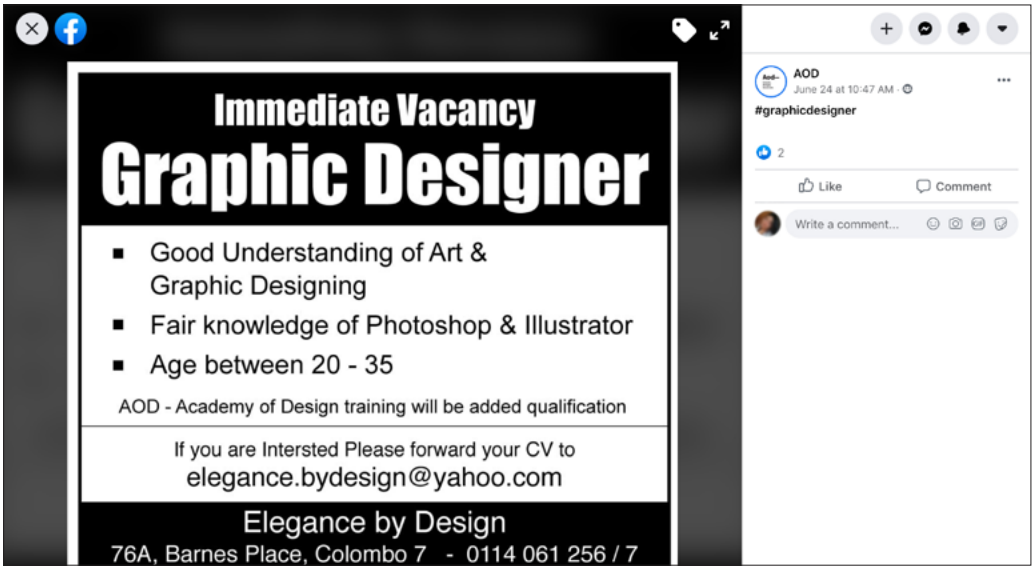


Figure 29 An online post on the official Facebook page for AOD alumni, AOD, 2020.

However, speaking with AOD students and alumni in Colombo during focus groups and workshops suggested that most participants would avoid this type of work as they see their AOD–Northumbria qualification to be worth more than the sum of their skills training in design software.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, designers must function within social and institutional structures which can enable or restrict the growth of design practice (Heskett, 2015). The limited public understanding of the professional practice of graphic designers in Sri Lanka meant AOD students, as well as graduates, had to manage social scrutiny and even criticism for their decision to study and practice the subject. Several students expressed their frustration at being asked by friends and family why they needed to pay for a degree programme to learn computer software. Some participants also shared that their parents needed convincing that there would be a return on their investment of paying for a design education at a private institute.

Considering these social restrictions, a focus group discussion with alumni revealed that the franchise partnership with Northumbria University positively influences AOD's perception as an academic institute based on the affiliation with England,

> My dad was really against the whole design thing at first. So, the whole point of persuading him was like telling him that this degree comes from England and it is recognised (globally) (Janani, focus group, February 16, 2019).

Ananya also spoke of her parents valuing a British degree more than the design education she was receiving at AOD because to them, "even though I study at AOD, it is a degree from Northumbria University in England" (Focus group, February 16, 2019).

By interacting with parents over time, many members of staff at AOD, including Amanda, had concluded that most parents, at least initially, are not particularly interested in the details of the franchise partnership in terms of institutional reputation or global rankings; they value a degree from Britain,

> One thing you might have heard from anyone who is Sri Lankan, when it comes to British design education, because of being colonised people see it as being something superior. For a Sri Lankan, it might be the case that they have heard of this as being the best brand in the world, so a British degree is the best thing you can afford for your child. When it comes to design education, culturally, we have a lot of interaction with arts and crafts and design, but there was never a formal introduction to the subject. For example, it's not part of the secondary education curriculum. So, when it comes to design education, they (the parents) buy into the superior partner that AOD is always selling (Amanda, Interview, February 18, 2019).

As discussed in Chapter 1 , the global reputation of British design and higher education having high quality and standards is a motivator for academic internationalisation and franchising. It appears that while AOD students' parents see British qualifications to be of a global standard, they do not necessarily care for or know of the programme since design has only recently been introduced as an academic subject in Sri Lanka.

For parents who are not well versed in design as a discipline or are openly critical of it, a significant reason they agree to support their child's education at AOD is because of its affiliation with a British university. In effect, they buy into the idea of investing in a British design education which is seen as cultural capital in the "institutionalised state" (Bourdieu 2019, p. 79). The qualification offered by the AOD-Northumbria programme, or the BA (Hons) degree from Northumbria University, is perceived as "a certificate of cultural competence that confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture" (ibid., p. 83).

As an institute, AOD advertises its value in offering a recognised certificate of competence, which can offer cultural capital, leading to professional mobility. Their website describes their link with Northumbria University and England as a key to "a highly respected design passport to work anywhere in the world" (AOD x Northumbria University, 2020). In Amanda's experience of teaching students at AOD and interacting with their parents, the local perception of foreign education is considered valuable for receiving global institutional recognition. Here value is perceived in terms of accumulating capital, which "makes it possible to establish conversion rates between cultural capital and economic capital by guaranteeing the monetary value of a given academic capital" (Bourdieu 2019, p. 83). This cultural capital or institutional recognition can potentially be converted to economic and social capital in the form of opportunities for work and mobility or migration; that could mean a life in Canada, Australia, or Singapore.

On the subject of cultural capital and migration, at a focus group discussion with alumni, Ayesha spoke of aspirations to get permanent residence status in Canada. She felt her Northumbria degree would help in the process since "the AOD British degree is more recognised" (Focus group, February 16, 2019). However, during the same discussion, others challenged the belief of a British degree easing the process of migration. Chaturi stated that even if they aspire for a life abroad, almost all AOD-Northumbria graduates from Sri Lanka work in Colombo.

Cole, being a foreigner who had lived in Sri Lanka and taught at AOD for several years, believed Sri Lanka's postcolonial state shapes certain social values in the country,

> You probably heard of a lot of people here tell people about how they have a UK degree, but they do not really differentiate in those conversations between a suburban college in Surrey and Oxford. It is just— I have a UK degree. That's it, that is the value, and it says a lot about how their society sees that. Really interestingly, the largest competing institution to AOD, in my second year here was hiring another American to run the comparable section to me, and it talked about a US degree. Her degree was from, I looked it up, an online university in Florida. But to them, it didn't matter, she has a US degree. That is the pedigree. (Interview, February 14, 2019).

As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.6), one criticism of postcolonial discourse is being complicit with the new power structures of global capitalism (Rizvi et al. 2006, p.250). Dilrik (1994, p. 353) argues that the postcolonial celebration of cultural differences assists transnational capitalism by extending the market reach of its

commodities which are presented as culturally hybrid and responsive to the needs and desires of new cosmopolitans who benefit from global capitalism. The families of most AOD students fall into this social category of *new cosmopolitans* with historically produced desires from when Sri Lanka was colonised along with the financial capability to fulfil them.

Educational globalisation developed and intensified with the advent of European colonialism (Tikly 2001, p.157); as discussed in Chapter 2, the legacy of British colonialism is visible in several aspects of Sri Lankan culture, including education and the concept of design. Colonial subjects remain internally colonised even after independence with an aspiration for "whiteness" (Rizvi et al. 2006, p.251). The perceived value of a British design education in Sri Lanka, and particularly for AOD students' parents is evidence of Rizvi et al's critique since the desire for British things is a product of colonialism. On the one hand, TNE systems help fulfil the new cosmopolitans' aspirations of accessing educational qualifications from the West locally. However, does it actually enable the dream of global mobility and working anywhere in the world?

6.2 Evaluating a Passport to Design Practice

The narratives in the previous section suggests a lack of understanding and even critical view of the discipline of graphic design in Sri Lanka. Yet, AOD promotes professional success as a guaranteed result of investing in a design education with a "ninety-nine percent employment rate" (AOD.lk | Career Resources, 2020). For design education to provide students with a passport to enter their future community of practitioners, Tovey suggests that design professionals be engaged in the learning process (2015, p. 46). Facilitating this type of engagement can involve multiple setups: industry involvement in the programme; student work placements and internships; and industry-sponsored project briefs are a few examples suggested by Tovey. These measures are effective mechanisms for ensuring the professional relevance of the course of study and establishes a network of relationships between those in design education and the industry (ibid.).

As discussed previously, Northumbria University's School of Design, and in turn, AOD have a distinct focus on providing students opportunities to engage in real-world design problems through industry sponsored briefs. Particularly in the case of AOD, industry engagement is crucial as it is necessary for evidencing the economic value of design intervention, raising the local industry's awareness of value creation through design, and ensuring student employment upon graduation. For example, over the years, AOD's graphic design department has fostered relationships with local design studios such as We Are Designers (We Are Designers, 2020) and Balmond Studio (Balmond Studio, 2020) to provide student internships. These industry experiences have, at times, led to full-time positions upon students graduating.

Additionally, they have developed relationships with companies outside the creative industry such as the hyper-local organic produce company Saaraketha (Saaraketha, 2020) and luxury wellness company Spa Ceylon (Spa Ceylon, 2020). Developing student project briefs and seeing their outcomes led these companies in specific to create in-house design teams that have employed AOD graduates. While the institute's academic and management teams continue to foster relationships with local design studios and

companies outside the creative industry to push forward the economic value of design, different types of engagement with people in the industry shape the experience of accessing communities of professional practice for AOD's students and alumni.

During my field research in Colombo, discussions with these stakeholders revolved around the role of design portfolios in evaluating design skills, accessing opportunities for work locally, and accessing a wider community of design practitioners. The design portfolio is considered the physical manifestation of a passport to practice by assembling and curating a student or graduates' skills and abilities to set them apart from others (Tovey, 2015). Tovey admits that there are many types of designers and design activities, "professional groupings can be seen in the context refinement of a family of design activities each with its own history and traditions" (2015, p. 40). Although his examples of the portfolio as a passport to practice are from the field of automotive design, he argues that all practice-based design education has commonality in the use of "visuospatial intelligence in solving design problems" (ibid., p.48). This practical skill can be externalised in visual forms, such as drawings, and bundled together in a portfolio becomes the entry ticket to the community of design practice.

As an alumna who had been working as an editorial designer at the time of the focus group, Kalpani agreed with Tovey; she felt the AOD degree programme helps students develop a foundation of skills that are needed to work in the industry and a portfolio becomes essential in evidencing those skills. The consensus amongst alumni was that a practice-based education in design arms students with a portfolio in addition to a degree certificate, a tangible outcome which other disciplines do not have.

A workshop with third-year students in Colombo who had recently finished their internships led to varying insights on Tovey's notion of a portfolio being considered the physical manifestation of a passport to practice. As part of the Northumbria curriculum, all students at AOD are required to complete a six to eight-week internship after the conclusion of their second year of studies. In several students' experience, a portfolio "allows the employers to look at people through their work, so it is not about people, but the work they are looking for. For example, an employer can say that I need a person who can do a lot of things, suddenly it doesn't become about the depth of the project, it's like, can you handle all these things?" (Student Workshop, February 13, 2019).

The previous student statement affirms Tovey's belief that through the "assemblage of work they demonstrate that they can tackle design problems to a standard which is recognisably that of their professional community" (2015, p. 37). A portfolio, particularly as a visual format which can be shared over email, helped break physical barriers and allowed students to share their creative abilities with a bigger audience. Portfolios are beneficial as "an introduction to your work and your skills" (Student Workshop, February 13). Conversely, many employers chose to not look at portfolios while interviewing students for internship positions,

> They didn't ask for my portfolio; it was more of an interview-based thing because I was handling a lot of brand strategy and product development and

> marketing. So, it was more about communication and how even as designers we don't always get to work with brands from their conception, we are put into it halfway through and how we are able to extract the information from that existing brand and portray it out into the world is also something they look for. They didn't care about what I had in my portfolio but how I could develop their brand (Student Workshop, February 13, 2019).

Another key point mentioned by the third-year students was how their technical skills (displayed in portfolios) were only a part of the skills required to ensure entry into professional practice. Their interpersonal skills were equally important,

> Besides your portfolio, your personality matters. How you communicate with others and get along with everyone, teamwork, that's what most people are looking for in a company or the industry. Besides your design skills, you need to have these skills as well. So, it's 50:50 on balance (Student Workshop, February 13, 2019).

For those working in collaborative studio practice, refined communication and interpersonal skills, as described in the previous student's statement, are an essential component of their design activities. However, demonstrating familiarity with this domain-specific skill is hard to represent in a visual portfolio. For most students in the final year of the graphic design programme, the internship was their introduction to professional design practice. Nevertheless, they seemed to have collectively concluded that their portfolios would only get them so far in the industry; their soft skills in communication, collaboration, and self-direction mattered equally and required in-person interaction to convey to potential employers.

Purvi graduated from AOD in 2016 and spoke of similar experiences of employers' focusing on soft skills in the hiring process. While at a job interview after graduation, an interviewer had asked her a series of scenario-based questions to assess her professionalism. "My final project was about Yaksha tribes in Sri Lanka, and he asked what if a publisher wants to put this in an actual book, would you be confident? He knew by looking at the portfolio, okay, this person is talented, and yes, she can illustrate my articles. He knew that, but he wanted to know my attitude towards work" (Focus group, February 16, 2019). In Purvi's opinion, her soft skills set her apart from other practitioners who had portfolios presenting impeccable crafting skills.

For AOD alumnus Roshan, the value of a portfolio in getting opportunities for work depends on the viewer. "It depends on who sees it. An industry person may look at it differently from a person who does not have an idea about design, like your parents." In addition to parents, alumnae Kalpani, Gayathri, and Senuri spoke of people in the Sri Lankan corporate sector not knowing the range of services graphic design practitioners offer and, as a result, requesting limited work which did not use their gamut of skills. In Senuri's experience, most potential clients evaluated their portfolios based on aesthetic appearance and personal taste. "If they ask for a graphic designer in the corporate sector, they don't know what we are talking about unless we've provided a detailed explanation. So, when you meet them, they say— we saw your portfolio, it's nice; that kind of thing" (Focus Group, March 9, 2019).

The professional practice of graphic design varies since design services can be applied to many industries, and the global design industry is a diverse space. In a 2019 census of the design industry in the United States of America, most designers were employed in the communication and graphic design industries which include advertising, marketing, social media, and digital products and services (AIGA, Google, Accurat 2019, p. 16). In addition to these expected industries and business, designers were working in the aerospace industry, biotech, and finance (ibid.). A critical difference between the design industry versus practice is that while design practice involves specific types of design work, designing publications, identity systems, and advertising, for example, design practice and services can add value to businesses outside the creative industry. However, the capacity of an industry to recognise the value of design services can vary across nations.

Tovey's analogy focuses on the impact of industry engagement on a student's portfolio in providing a *professional polish* to the body of work and therefore meeting the portfolio's function as a passport to practice by helping students build relations for a point of entry. However, as mentioned by AOD alumni, for a potential employer to discern professional polish in a student or graduates' portfolio, they must be well versed in the visual language of design methods and processes. In the case of potential employers or clients in Sri Lanka, this is not always the case since there is a gap in understanding what graphic design involves. AOD students and alumni agreed that while a portfolio is an essential object to manifest design skills, it does not guarantee employment or commercial opportunities.

6.3 Graphic Designers in the Advertising Industry

All alumni who participated in the focus group discussions agreed with Tovey's statement that as students, their "end goal is that of achieving a level of capability to function as designers in the professional world" (2015, p. 37). According to Swanson (1994), a design educator based in America, a graphic design education does little to prepare students for careers outside the design industry, making it highly specialised vocational training. Echoing Swanson, Ayesha, who graduated in 2016, expressed, "when I was studying, I didn't know I could be anything but a designer" (Focus group, February 16, 2019). In the case of design students in Sri Lanka studying a British curriculum, a specialist training in graphic design is problematic because it assumes that both nations have a creative industry with skilled jobs awaiting design graduates.

Although alumni wanted to be designers, their local industry did not have open positions for designers per se. Even with academic staff and management at AOD making efforts to engage with the local industry to establish a network of relationships for students to find employment after graduation, the overall progress is slow. Graduates had to learn to adapt and take on roles as in-house creatives at technology start-ups, work as freelancers, or as junior art directors in the Sri Lankan advertising industry, which hires most of AOD's graphic design graduates.

When Chaturi graduated in 2010, she had a rough start; "when I was entering the industry, there was no graphic design; it was only advertising. Suddenly we were graphic designers in the advertising industry, and we felt left out. We did not know

where to turn or what to do, and we were not equipped to adapt. Now, of course, we are talking about how a graphic designer can be a manager, a businesswoman, whatever. But I feel we can talk about that more in the academics, while the student is studying, at a modular level where we teach them how adaptation works" (Focus group, February 16, 2019).

Unlike most of the focus group participants who worked in advertising firms or creative enterprises, Senuri graduated in 2015 and initially worked at tech start-ups. She now works as the creative head for a Sri Lankan social enterprise which provides community support on issues related to sexual and reproductive health. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the National Education Commission of Sri Lanka (2017) claims that a foreign higher education degree leads to better-earning capacity for local graduates. In contrast, during a discussion on this perceived financial value of their British education, Senuri spoke of her shock at the low pay scales offered to her and other classmates during job interviews at advertising firms,

> When I joined (the industry), the salary was so low. They didn't care if we had a degree or if we were a self-taught graphic designer; we were getting the same pay. Unless you demanded or asked saying– hey, listen up, I have a degree, and I think I need to be paid more, they would not consider you as eligible for another salary. I went to Lowe LDB, a few of us went there, and they were offering 15,000 LKR (60 GBP) per month. We had just graduated, and we said, the minimum is about 25,000 LKR and we couldn't work for 15,000 LKR. They said that previous design graduates who are working there are still on that salary. Then we came back, and we were discussing amongst ourselves that it's not our fault that we are being categorised on that scale because the people before us should have also said that they cannot work for that amount; it's not right with the education that we have received. We didn't know what to do so we looked at other options, but that was the kind of response we had when we graduated and were going on job interviews (Focus group, March 9, 2019).

Senuri's statement describes disappointment felt by alumni in the sharp contrast of their expectations of being valued as a skilled and qualified designer, versus their reality. The design education and qualification that AOD graduates possess makes them feel entitled to good salaries and financial success for two reasons. First, they have received a formal design education with a globally recognised degree. In effect, they felt they had accumulated cultural capital. Second, AOD students are sold on the promise of being prepared for "outstanding creative careers" (AOD.lk, 2020) by the institute's senior management and the marketing team.

The advertising agency mentioned by Senuri, Lowe LDB, is officially known as Mullen Lowe Sri Lanka, one of the many arms of the global marketing and communications network Mullen Lowe headquartered in Boston, USA (Mullen Lowe Sri Lanka, 2020). Globalisation facilitates the increased provision of financial and other services geared towards all levels of society through global webs, making it possible for firms to relocate a range of operations to places where cost-competitive labour, assets, and infrastructure are available (Hoogvelt, 1997). This financial deepening has increased the flow of global capital with information technology, enabling the mobility of money

across national boundaries (ibid.). The demand for and access to job opportunities in advertising in Colombo is enmeshed in this global flow of services and capital.

Historically, the global division of labour developed under colonialism involved the production of primary commodities or raw materials in the Global South and their conversion to manufactured products in the North (Tikly 2001, p.159). With labour-intensive manufacturing relocating wherever production cost is lowest, the system still benefits the industrialised nations by reducing their costs (ibid.). Unlike the historical distribution of labour based on sourcing and manufacturing, the current global redistribution of labour is based on cost-competitiveness. Transnational corporations facilitate an unequal exchange with different wage levels operating in different nations based on the colonial core-periphery hierarchy (Hoogvelt 1997, p. 60); which graduates in Sri Lanka experience. The local bourgeoisie or new cosmopolitans, such as the management of Mullen Lowe Sri Lanka, facilitates the wage exploitation of the periphery for the profit orientation of contemporary transnational firms (ibid.).

Alumni who participated in the field research spoke of disparity in pricing design services globally. They faced challenges in pricing their services, whether as freelancers or being engaged in full-time employment because of a public expectation that design services in Sri Lanka should be cheap, especially when compared to their Western counterparts. Ananya mentioned having conversations on pricing with London based designers who were visiting the design studio where she worked,

> When we tell them our price category, that is all we can get in this market because what they (clients) do is bargain and they get the price down. They (the visiting designers) are like we charge two hundred and something (British pounds) per hour, and we are just sitting there like, we can never charge that here. That is never going to work (Focus group, February 16, 2019).

In a similar vein, as a self-employed freelancer, Ayesha spoke of a potential client commenting that a quote for her design services was the same as a well experienced American graphic designer. According to them, as someone practicing in Sri Lanka, she could not justify charging the same amount as an American designer; rather than lower her design fee, Ayesha gave up the project.

Some practitioners, like Senuri use their agency to demand better compensation. In her experience it was not that clients or organisations wanting to employ graphic designers lacked the financial capability to pay fair compensation for design services, but had an expectation that such services were cheap,

> When I negotiated, they wanted me to work for them, so they obliged. They were just starting out, but then, later on, we did get pay raises, and they brought in people with bigger salaries, that kind of thing. So, it wasn't an issue that they did not have funding, it was just that they were starting and that was the general pay scale for graphic designers (Focus group, March 9, 2019).

In addition to low pay scales, a recurring issue put forward by alumni was that the Sri Lankan industry values work-experience more than a formal education when

it comes to hiring people and paying them well, particularly in advertising firms. Roshan's opinion was that employers valued expertise in meeting deadlines and working with quick timelines more than the conceptual or design thinking skills they developed through the degree programme. Even though all graphic design students at AOD complete an internship during their studies, alumni felt most advertising firms do not consider that as *proper* experience,

> That is something that AOD could have had. I mean, the internship period is quite short. In government universities, they have a mandatory one-year internship period. When you graduate, you get a shock when you get into the industry and learn how it works. The start is a bit rough but what you learn in AOD comes in handy as you climb up. That is something others will not have (Roshan, Focus group, March 9, 2019).

Roshan's point about their formal education being helpful at a later stage in their career was demonstrated by Chaturi who spoke of being hired as a design consultant by advertising agencies to teach their art directors design methods and processes because they had not received a formal design education and learned on the job. She felt this opportunity would make the industry more accessible and work in favour of graphic designers as their design skills were beginning to be validated and recognised.

The research findings suggest that creative industry in Sri Lanka appears to be in flux. One point of consensus from focus group discussions was that there is a lack of understanding in the industry and society of graphic design skills and processes beyond executing visual designs which suit a client's aesthetic. Chaturi felt the only way to overcome this discriminatory attitude and expectation of cheap design services in Sri Lanka was by coming together as a professional community and setting industry standards of fair pay.

In 2020, the British Council's regional office in Colombo, in collaboration with the Institute of Policy Studies in Sri Lanka, published a first of its kind study assessing the current state of creative and cultural industries in the country. The report included industries in arts and culture, design, and media and identified challenges posed to creative industries and provided recommendations to grow the sector (British Council and Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka, 2020). The study included a survey of close to five hundred creative practitioners across seven provinces in Sri Lanka, eight focus group discussions with seventy-five participants, and forty interviews with "key informants" (ibid., p. 2). The insights stated in the report attest to the narrative data of this project's field research— creative practitioners in Sri Lanka feel a lack of support for their work at the state level as well as "a low level of appreciation for or awareness about their products/industry" (ibid., p. 23).

For AOD graduates who want to be practicing designers and those who see that as their only option, they must adapt to forge their own path. They must do this in an environment of low standards of pay for design services, economic inflation and rising costs, barriers to raising capital for business, and limited access to markets outside national borders to sell their services (British Council and Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka 2020). In Sri Lanka, the education of a design student needs to

prepare them to not only be skilled practitioners but have the agency to promote the value of their skills, build their local industry, and set standards for fair compensation which move past unequal wage policies of transnational corporations.

6.4 Explicit and Implicit Communities of Practice

As illustrated in the previous sections, graphic design as a discipline and profession is not particularly valued in Sri Lanka which is compounded by a nascent local design industry. The lack of a robust localised community of design practice leads to disappointment felt by graduates when they enter the industry. There appears to be a sharp contrast in their expectations of being recognised as skilled and qualified designers, versus a reality of no institutional structures to help set standards, problem-solve, or share a mutually defined identity for those starting professional practice.

Tovey (2015, p. 48) states that for each specialist group of practising designers, there are either implicit or explicit communities of professional practice. As practitioners with shared skills and knowledge, all practising designers implicitly belong to the global community of designers. Many practitioners, including those who participated in this project, use their portfolio to identify their membership to their implicit community and engage with other practitioners by sharing skills on online platforms such as Behance (Behance, 2020), for instance. Additionally, as people studying the same design course, students are part of an implicit educational community spread across Sri Lanka, England and any other country with an institute teaching the Northumbria design curriculum. However, as described by Cole in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.2), this implicit community between students in Newcastle and Colombo has not been realised or resulted in any transnational relationships amongst students.

Alumni in Colombo spoke of the lack of interaction with their parallel cohorts in Newcastle as a missed opportunity for spirited competition and collaboration on design projects since they were following the same curriculum and often working on the same project briefs,

> With the whiskey project, (our tutor) showed us that one project previous students (in Newcastle) have done. So that's when we got to realise that okay, this brief is actually happening there. Otherwise we didn't know (Purvi, Focus group, February 16, 2019).

Walking around the design studios for graphic design students in Colombo and Newcastle, the implicit community of practice made of students working through the same curriculum is made visible by similar projects strewn around the shelves. Alcohol packaging projects, for example (Figure 30).

While engaging with the exercise, Prototyping a Passport to Practice Design with design foundation students at AOD, it was clear that they aspired for a digital or material manifestation of membership to implicit communities of design practice (Figure 31). They prototyped passport-like objects that would allow for access to museums and other design institutions worldwide based on their identity of being design students. As discussed in Section 3.6.1, given that the design foundation students were complete novices to design practice and lateral thinking, their prototypes were a literal take on

passports as travel documents which declare national identity. However, their designed outcomes below exemplify the previously mentioned desire for global mobility by new cosmopolitans (Section 6.1).

Figure 30 Packaging project on a brief based on the seven sins by AOD student, Colombo, 2019. Packaging project by Northumbria University student, Newcastle, 2019.

Figure 31 AOD Design Foundation student prototypes of a Passport to Design Practice, February 2019.

Explicit communities of practice, on the other hand, are those who grant membership to applicants who can pass standards and criteria held by formal or national bodies. Tovey gives the example of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Similarly, the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (SLIA), an allied society of the RIBA since the 1960s, is an explicit community of practice for all architects in Sri Lanka. The organisation describes itself as one of the "foremost professional organisations in Sri Lanka, working towards raising the standards of architectural education

and professional practice" (About Us | Sri Lanka Institute of Architects, 2020). Such formalised communities of practice recognised by the State or professional bodies are easy to identify and can help improve the public perception of design.

Research participants in Sri Lanka were aware of institutional communities of practice for graphic designers in the UK from their academic curriculum. The main introduction to these communities is through participation in student design competitions, for example, the International Society of Typographic Designers to which Ayesha gained membership as a competition winner (Chapter 4). Similarly, the privately founded British Design and Art Direction now shortened to D&AD has members representing the creative, design, and advertising communities "not just in Britain, but worldwide" (About D&AD, 2020). Anyone can gain membership through payment but members vet each other for their creative talent through design competitions and awards.

While responding to the exercise, Prototype a Passport to Practice, discussions amongst alumni on methods to gain access to a wider community of practice led to the recognition of the lack of local design communities which were recognised by the state. Design graduates in Sri Lanka could benefit from an explicit design community or council communicating the social, cultural, and economic value of design and advocating for the discipline. One group of participants stressed the importance of building awareness of what graphic design involves and prototyped a website for a local design council with the working title— The Chartered Institute of Designers (Figure 32).

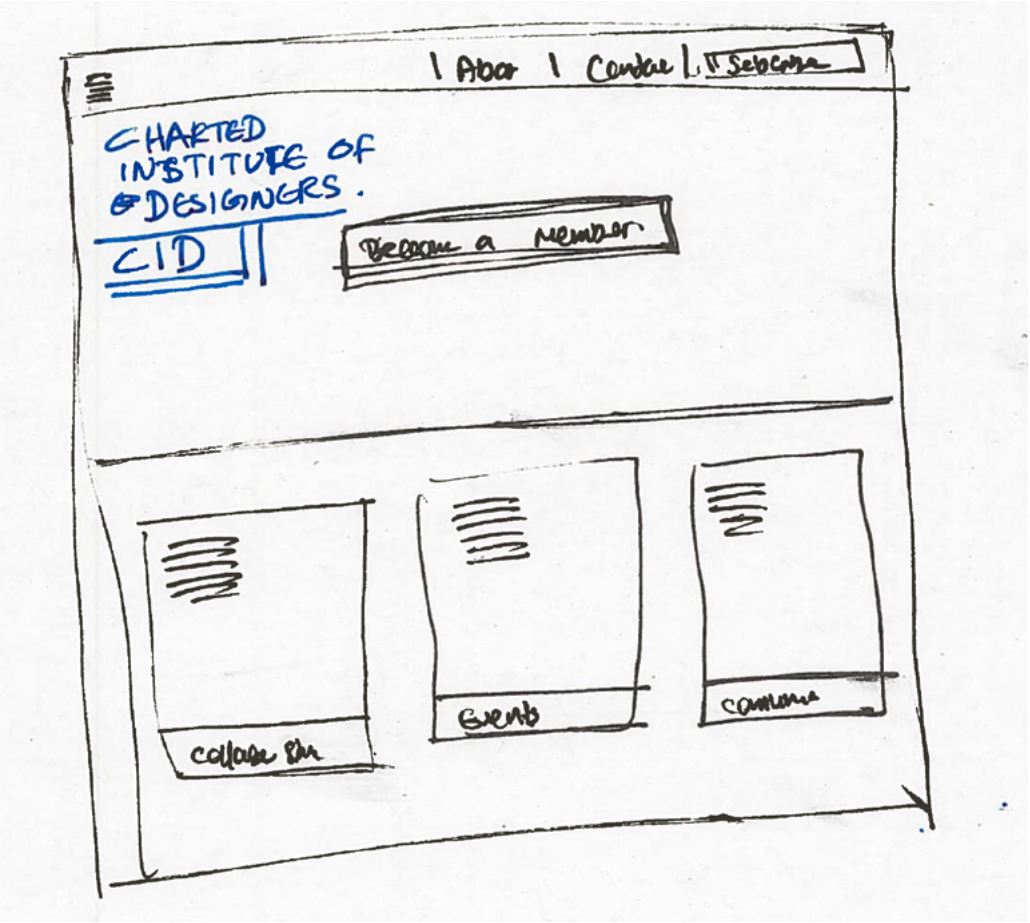


Figure 32 Prototype of a website for an explicit community of design practice, Colombo, February 2019.

Rather than aspiring for international recognition by supporting membership in communities such as the D&AD, Chaturi spoke of setting up a local design council or organisation in affiliation with the Ministry of Education, for instance, to help validate their design qualification locally. "When you are recognised by the government, it means you are making a significant contribution to the economy and social development. This does not need any international recognition. Let us uphold standards for ourselves first with our government and our people, and then we can have collaborations or invite international designers" (Focus group, February 16, 2019). In terms of passports being objects which ensure admission to places, AOD alumni see the importance of organising themselves so they could begin to define a local community of design practitioners to aspire for entry into, and eventually, a Sri Lankan design identity.

In the context of AOD, a regional example of a professional community of design practice is the India Design Council. Founded in 2009, the organisation "endeavours to increase knowledge, develop design capability, encourage businesses to use design, and drive value creation through design" (indiadesigncouncil.org, 2020). As a strategic national body for design in India, their objectives include raising awareness about design and its effectiveness to the local public and private sectors, establishing design innovation and research in the country, and promoting design education with bespoke initiatives such as a National Design Policy and the India Design Mark seal (ibid.). Although the India Design Council is an exclusive organisation promoting design in India, it can be a point of reference for creative professionals in Sri Lanka as the social and cultural challenges overlap.

6.5 Professional Practice and Bravery

In November 2019, Northumbria University hosted a conference on professional practice for their graphic design students on campus in Newcastle by inviting alumni to share their experiences of working in the industry. Titled Brave, the theme was the importance of bravery in professional practice (Figure 33). The speakers had travelled from Manchester and London to share their experience of working in transnational studios such as Pentagram, JKR, Turner Duckworth, and Design Bridge as designers and art directors. The speakers offered varied advice; many stressed the importance of design awards leading to professional opportunities, harnessing the power of social media to get noticed, and creating work which was *instragammable*. They also stated the importance of not staying in one's comfort zone and having diverse perspectives in the design industry. Although all alumni presenting had full-time jobs, several of them also had personal projects, businesses, or "bits on the side" because "graphic design is great for making up your own career" (Presentation, November 15, 2019).

The first speaker of the day shared anecdotes of living out of a suitcase during short internships in design studios in London and Rotterdam soon after graduation. She stated that "you can be a good designer anywhere" (Presentation, November 15, 2019), implying that students in Newcastle should explore opportunities beyond London for their careers as professional practitioners. Every presenter shared comparable stories of mobility and travel to their agencies' studios in New York City, Melbourne, and Singapore and working with globally recognised clients such as Coca Cola and Burger King. The Brave conference helped set expectations for students in England who were

looking forward to becoming professional designers in a competitive but vital sector for their economy. The overall image of professional practice portrayed to them was an exciting one; the global community of design could be their proverbial oyster.

Figure 33 Presentation at the Brave Conference in Northumbria University, November 2019.

A few months earlier, while I was in Colombo, Jayan, an alum of AOD's graphic design department was invited to present a project which had won an Impact Award from the D&AD to final year students working on design competition briefs. Like the speakers in Newcastle, Jayan worked at Leo Burnett, a transnational advertising company with a network of agencies in several countries. In contrast to the professional mobility experienced by alumni in Newcastle, he spoke of having to work remotely on the award-winning project to collaborate with his senior art director in Toronto and the challenges that involved; for example, a nine and a half hour time difference.

The narratives shared by alumni in Newcastle and Colombo show that although they have shared experiences of participating in the same design competitions and at times winning awards, their experience of being part of an explicit community of practice, like D&AD, varies significantly. Alumni presenting in Newcastle shared the possibility of such competitions leading to opportunities for professional mobility in the form of work placements or internships outside the UK. Jayan's presentation in Colombo, on the other hand, stressed the importance of showcasing Sri Lankan talent and visual culture on global platforms where they lacked representation to boost the local creative industry.

On the subject of professional mobility, although Amanda and Ayesha spoke of Western educational qualifications aiding Sri Lankan aspirations of migration, focus group discussions in Colombo suggested that most graduates from AOD practice locally with no mention of international travel for work. "We have to make sure that this degree will be of value to the local market. If this (British connection) is the only network that AOD has and they do not expand their local networks, they will not be able to give students more options to find jobs" (Chaturi, Interview,

February 17, 2019). In a nascent creative industry dominated by advertising firms and a society not familiar with the scope of graphic design, studying at AOD "was not just about the degree; it was also about the social skills it taught us. It [the institute] has a communal value not just as an academic space but as a business which has a good reputation of establishing and breaking through the design conversation in Sri Lanka" (Focus group, February 16, 2019).

These empirical insights reveal that AOD graduates see value in their design education as an opportunity to access a liberal learning experience which teaches them interpersonal skills and collaboration necessary to adapt to their circumstances. These soft skills, which are by-products developed by students in the process of studying graphic design at AOD, arms them with the ability to think independently and realise their potential as design professionals in a local industry that does not always value them (Bagchi, 2021).

6.6 Passports Enabling Mobility

The recent title, *The Design Politics of the Passport* (Keshavarz, 2019), examines and discusses the politics produced by the material existence of passports. According to Keshavarz, a passport is "called upon in places where the necessity of a border is felt or desired" (2019, p. 7). The notion of a border or barrier, for this study, can be a state and the national identity it provides, a community of design practitioners, or even a lack of one. As discussed in Chapter 1, globalisation and transnational systems suggest freedom of movement and the promise of high mobility of all things: objects, people, capital, and services.

From the empirical data gathered from participants in Sri Lanka, this chapter can conclude that for many AOD students, graduates, and parents, their values of education and success are entangled in postcolonial aspirations of accessing the West and globalisation's promise of opportunity and mobility. As an educational institute, AOD capitalises on these aspirations through strategic advertising. Furthermore, social restrictions in Sri Lanka (Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2) hinder the growth of design practice alongside a lack of explicit communities of practice or institutional structure bolstering the discipline. Based on this contextual reality, one would expect AOD graduates to explore opportunities to practice design outside their national borders in places which value design services. Therefore, the notion of a passport lends itself to comparing the mobility of design students and practitioners based in distinct parts of the world equipped with theoretically equivalent passports to practice design and promise of professional opportunity.

In the sphere of global mobility, Keshavarz's work relates to the global political system of passports, visas, and immigration control. On the other hand, Tovey's passport to practice suggests a portfolio as an object for mediating design graduates' entry into a community of professional practice. However, the metaphoric and material realities of passports and portfolios overlap—for example, the notion of individuality and uniqueness. The inclusion of biometrics in passports makes the object authentic to an individual body. The paradox lays in the fact that although passports are highly individualised documents codified to our bodies, they classify us into a wider group of nationality and right to protection by our State (Keshavarz 2019, p.37). Similarly,

the purpose of a portfolio is to document the unique abilities of a designer and make them authentic to an individual. While highlighting an individual's creative ability and style, it includes them into an implicit community of design practice and, based on their skills, further groups them into specialist fields.

Passports as objects or metaphors determine mobility as they regulate individuals by making certain worlds accessible for some and restricting them to others. As objects determining national identity, they ease or prevent the mobility of bodies across national borders. The idea of portfolios as passports which mediate entry to professional practice can involve the physical movement of a designer to enter their desired community. It is also suggestive of mobility in the ability to move up the proverbial professional ladder.

Reflecting on this notion of passports, AOD graduate Kalpani stated that "the idea of a passport is interesting because if it is a passport, then everybody has the same passport. It matches a certain set of standards, so that makes it more transparent" (Focus group, March 9, 2019). In her opinion, the notion of design portfolios being used as passports suggests a system of merit-based universality since students working towards a design degree from Northumbria University must meet the same academic standards to graduate. However, this is not the case as Keshavarz sheds light on how passports, as global standardised systems, do not lead to fixed or universal experiences for individual bearers.

Passports mediate and shape their bearers' experience of moving, residing, and acting in the world (Keshavarz, 2019). Websites such as the Henley Passport Index, for example, rank every nation's passport on a mobility scale which determines how many countries a passport holder can travel to without the need for a visa. The index ranks a British passport as the 7th most powerful in the world with a mobility score of 185 (Henley Passport Index, 2020). For a British student, a strong design portfolio can lead to opportunities for work in countries across Europe and even further afield. Alumni at the Brave conference in Newcastle encouraged students to aspire for opportunities beyond London as their careers had led them to travel across the world and enhanced their professional practice from those experiences. Their British passports also allow for freedom of movement across national borders.

A Sri Lankan passport, in contrast, is ranked at 100 on the Henley Passport Index with a mobility score of 42. The impact on global mobility caused by disparities amongst passports revealed itself in many ways throughout this project. In October 2019, I spent a day with two senior lecturers and final year students in the graphic design department at Northumbria University's School of Design. I was shadowing George, one of my research participants, as he and his colleague provided feedback to groups of students on an exhibition design brief. During a break, another member of staff came in to share details of an upcoming academic field trip to Amsterdam to visit design studios and explore the city's visual culture. Interested students were asked to sign up for the trip about a month in advance to help plan the studio visits and travel logistics.

The Amsterdam trip announcement reminded me of various field trips I had facilitated

during my time at AOD. For instance, every year, the graphic design students at AOD had the option to attend the Kyoorius Designyatra (Designyatra, 2021), an annual design conference in India. As an event, Designyatra was a three-day celebration of the discipline of design, particularly, visual communication. The conference organisers curate a line-up of regional and international speakers who would respond to open ended themes such as What If? During a discussion with AOD alumni, Senuri referred to the trip as an opportunity to be "in touch with what's happening elsewhere" (Focus group, March 9, 2019). The globally diverse speakers also allowed students based in Sri Lanka to envision the scope of their future professional practice.

Although the conference used to occur in September, the department administrator and I would start planning for the trip in June to give us a few months to plan for international travel which included significant paperwork to secure tourist visas for interested Sri Lankan students. The complex travel logistics were worth spending time on as the trip to India was a highlight for students by providing an opportunity to meet with and find inspiration in design practice from diverse places across the globe.

On a similar note, AOD alumni spoke of the unfair circumstances of having a Sri Lankan passport. They gave the example of students having tourist visa applications rejected for other study tours organised by AOD, a trip to New York, for example. Their passports can also block them from experiencing professional opportunities handed to them. Roshan gave the example of a student from the fashion department who had won a scholarship to display her final collection at Graduate Fashion Week in London. She was unable to attend the event because her visa application to the UK was rejected. The student who won the same opportunity the previous year did not face such barriers because even though he was brought up in Colombo and identifies as Sri Lankan, he has a British passport,

> Things like (actual) passports are a big thing for opportunities, because (a recent graduate) has a British passport, he immediately went overseas after he graduated. He started there basically; those are little things that affect your career as well (Senuri, focus group, March 9, 2019).

Keshavarz points out that for the privileged population of the world, specifically the "white middle-class citizens of the Global North," a passport is never at stake (2019, p. 2). Some passports only need a glance by an immigration officer while others require further checks. The requirement of visas, for example, can stem the flow of mobility. For those who are stateless, refugees, undocumented migrants, or working-class citizens of the Global South, the passport becomes an object of thought and scrutiny, making their bearers immobile.

The use of passports facilitates performative practices which produce borders which are not visible (Keshavarz 2019, p. 5). Keshavarz argues that "a passport is an object because it is in dialogue with other objects" (ibid., p. 32). For example, in the case of border crossings, he notes, mobility is enacted at airports during immigration where the other objects may include cameras, immigration desks, stamps, and visas. Passports enact their agency through their relationships with other objects; they must exist in a "network of relationships" (2019, p. 31), which Keshavarz calls

a political ecology. The political ecology of passports facilitates inequalities in situations of mobility and residence, making them "material evidence of exercising discrimination" (ibid.).

In Tovey's analogy of a passport to practice, designers' work is solution-focused creativity where visual thinking is externalised as design drawings and representations. This process of design practice, when packaged together in a portfolio, becomes the entry ticket, or passport, to the community of design practice (Tovey 2015, p. 48). This analogy determines access based on a practitioner's creative skill and merit. It does not consider the effects of a practitioner's nationality or contextual background for entering a community of practice.

As mentioned, the discipline of design and the abilities of its practitioners are wide-ranging which divides the broader design community into implicit and explicit groups locally and globally. As illustrated by the narratives in this chapter, for a student cohort in Northumbria University's School of Design, divided across Newcastle and Colombo, studying the same design curriculum, and developing portfolios with common projects to the same standard, their mobility and access to a community of design practitioners varies. Like Keshavarz's political ecology of passports, the ecology of communities of design practice depends on a network of relationships which moulds the experience of those placed in them. Empirical insights demonstrate that a design portfolio as a metaphorical passport to gain access to communities of practice is not a universally accepted object, but one that is enmeshed in global power relations which can enable access but also facilitate unequal experiences. The experiences of students and alumni reveals the inadequacy in suggesting a homogenous student experience in finding opportunities to practice design professionally.

For a passport to design practice to function, existing groups or communities of design practitioners need to be available for students to aspire to gain entry to. Design graduates in Sri Lanka face the challenge of not having a robust local creative industry or, as highlighted by the design exercise Prototyping a Passport to Practice, an explicit national council communicating the economic value of design locally. This perpetuates an industry standard of low pay scales and inefficient use of design capabilities. In contrast, practitioners in England are supported by various organisations, including the British Design Council which actively promotes the positive economic impact of the industry, the potential adverse effects of fewer students pursuing an education in art and design education, and a creative skills gap in the sector to support industries (Design Council, 2017 and 2020). Unlike the challenges of a professional deficit faced by graduates in Sri Lanka, students graduating and practicing in England must stand out in saturated and competitive local industry.

For the minority of global elites, access to private education provides forms of socialisation and skills development required for integration and participation in the global economy. AOD graduates, who can be considered as members of this group, have acquired the desired skills and agency to participate in global communities of design practice. However, their nationality and passport pose barriers that lead to an unequal experience of access within that global community.

To circle back to the research question— *how does a TNE experience in design education provide access to communities of design practice?* Through the lived experiences of various research participants, this chapter shows that students and graduates from the graphic design department of AOD see their AOD-Northumbria design education as an opportunity to access a liberal learning experience which enables their professional agency to express and realise their professional potential in a local industry that does not always value them. It is also inaccurate for transnational institutes like AOD to advertise having a Northumbria University qualification as a design passport to work anywhere in the world since a passport to design practice does not guarantee a universal experience in accessing professional opportunities.

Additionally, the ecology of professional relationships, opportunities, and standards for design practitioners varies across Britain and Sri Lanka. Cole, as someone who has been a member of AOD's academic and management team, described AOD as an engine which created professional opportunities for design practitioners locally,

> I am not sure if Sri Lanka is desperately in need for a hundred typographers. We are trying to make them have a market understanding of why that is a thing that you need in the world, rather than us saving a bunch of people from unemployment (Interview, February 14, 2019).

Designed systems, such as passports, produce unequal relations which are not identified or experienced by the hegemonic order since they enjoy the smooth flow of mobility promised by globalisations discourses of progress and possibility. In a similar vein, Tikly states "it is problematic to assume that there is one superior vantage point from which global forces can be understood" (2001, p.152). He suggests postcolonial elites use their participation and agency in international forums to contest and challenge Western economic and political hegemony (ibid., p.161). Interactions with AOD alumni suggest an energy which is leading towards Tikly's suggestion. For instance, while concluding one of the focus group discussions with alumni, Chaturi asked the rhetorical question—*what is a Sri Lankan designer?* It is an identity that is in the process of being imagined into being.

In the Sri Lankan context, the education of a design student must actively prepare them to not only be skilled practitioners but have the agency to promote the social, cultural, and economic value of their skills and develop a shared discourse reflecting their perspective of the world. Based on the recent report on the Creative and Cultural Industries of Sri Lanka (British Council and Institute of Policy Studies Sri Lanka, 2021) and discussions with students and alumni, there is an aspiration to develop a local industry which is place-specific and separate from the dominant discourses on design.

Ch 7 Transnational Trade to Communities of Practice

In September 2020, just before the UK was hit by a second wave of COVID-19 infections, the programme head of the visual communication design department at AOD asked if I would do an informal tutorial with final year graphic design students to give feedback on their Final Major Projects. The Final Major Project, previously introduced in Chapter 4 when detailing Northumbria's graphic design curriculum, is a module designed to make students consolidate the design skills developed over the years to create a resolved body of work for their portfolio. The module asks students to "ascertain your creative direction as you work towards your future career or further study" (Northumbria University, 2020).

During the tutorial session over Google Meet, the students virtually presented project topics which acknowledged and attempted to tackle a wide range of social issues: designing a campaign against student hazing in local colleges and universities; a proposal for an app-based wayfinding system for the visually impaired in the central train station in Colombo; and calling out sexual harassment in the world of competitive sports in Sri Lanka. Papanek (2019, p. 285) states that design education is about learning skills, nourishing talents, understanding concepts that inform the field and acquiring a philosophy. A design philosophy is the fundamental principles which guide a designer's process (ibid.). Based on their choices to spend most of their final year creatively broaching complex social issues that affected their communities, the graduating students at AOD were asserting themselves as inclusive, ethically motivated designers with the agency to develop a personal design philosophy.

To summarise, this thesis began with an overview of how globalisation has led to the internationalisation of higher education and the creation of a global knowledge industry to meet the demands of a Knowledge Society (Altbach and Knight 2007, p. 290). Traditionally, education was considered a public responsibility for being a space for social integration and developing citizenship (World Trade Organisation 2013, p. 2). However, the commodification of higher education has made educational services a private good to be purchased by those who can afford it, with transnational education playing an important role in the trade of such services (Chapter 1, Section 1.2).

A review of reports published by various British stakeholders invested in transnational education revealed that although TNE systems are only one part of the global knowledge industry, they continue to grow, evolve, and adapt to market conditions and demand (Chapter 1, Section 1.3). Research that informs TNE policy tends to privilege a global order in favour of exporting nations while ignoring the hierarchical power relations perpetuated to sustain their market dominance. Classification frameworks for TNE services defined by organisations such as the British Council (British Council and McNamara Economic Research, 2013; British Council and German Academic Exchange Service, 2017) are biased towards institutes which send their education services abroad. Franchise programmes, for example, are defined as partnerships where "a sending HEI authorises a host HEI to deliver its (sending HEI) programme, with no curricular input by the host institution. The qualification is awarded and quality assured by the sending institution" (British Council & McNamara Economic Research 2013, p. 15), suggesting an unequal partnership model designed to maintain hierarchical working relationships between sending and host institutes.

Postcolonial discourse was adopted as a theoretical framework to place stakeholders who have been on the margins of TNE research at the centre. As a critical lens, it helped shape the field research to identify concerns around notions of power, knowledge, and agency within institutional practices. The research design adopted a qualitative methodology to study the working relationship between AOD and Northumbria University's School of Design, which to empirical and theoretical insights derived from an ethnographic approach. Postcolonial analysis using concepts such as *agency* and *ambivalence* alongside theoretical concepts of *friction* (Tsing, 2005) and a *Third Space* (Bhabha, 2004) helped articulate hybrid academic practices manifested in the margins of TNE systems. These emergent practices offer alternatives to Western global hegemony and challenge the promise of globalised education systems offering a neutral, universal experience to students and educational facilitators.

The outcomes of this project extend scholarship on postcolonialism and globalised education systems by engaging with TNE from the perspective of design education and stakeholders based in host institutes. By visually distilling the key insights gathered from the various research participants, this chapter articulates a response to the primary research question—*what is the value of a British design education in a social, economic, and cultural context different from its own?* The final sections outline this study's contribution to knowledge, reflections on the limitations of the research, and future prospects.

7.1 Facilitating TNE: Identifying Themes and Responding to the Secondary Research Questions

Chapter 1 identified two concerns with TNE scholarship while reviewing select literature from diverse stakeholders in Britain and Sri Lanka at a national and institutional level. First, TNE research is primarily carried out by countries that send their higher education services abroad with limited involvement of the countries who host foreign educational services, creating a gap in research offering the perspective of academic institutes which host TNE services. Second, research reports which help define policies and frameworks for TNE rely on quantitative data, which lack an in-depth and critical understanding of the everyday facilitation of such academic systems in diverse social and cultural contexts. A qualitative approach, along with a constructivist epistemological stance, helped gather data that demonstrates how TNE stakeholders resist institutional structures, create emergent practices, and construct knowledge to suit their contextual reality and challenge notions of universality.

By examining the current landscape of the global knowledge industry, several sources revealed that in countries such as Sri Lanka, the demand for higher education far outstrips the supply. Public universities are unable to keep up with the growing demand for higher education services and have developed their private education provision to cope (Badat, 2016; British Council and India Design Council 2016; Smith 2007 and 2020). Privatised higher education is seen as one way to offer educational opportunities to the masses and create a skilled workforce for national economic development (Appadurai 2012, p. 637). To understand the perspectives of stakeholders placed within the globalised landscape of TNE, the field research gathered insights from individuals invested in the system to answer the following secondary research questions; *how does knowledge really flow in TNE systems?* Furthermore, *how do TNE*

systems acknowledge contextual specificities? Finally, if getting a British undergraduate degree in design locally through privatised higher education at AOD is meant to impact the Sri Lankan economy, the final secondary research question asked— *how does a TNE experience in design education provide access to communities of design practice?*

This section presents three thematic networks to visually present and discuss the global themes identified in Chapters 4, 5, and 6: first, Social and Institutional Structures Affecting Design Education in Sri Lanka; second, Points of Friction; and third, Navigating a Nascent Creative Industry with Design Agency. The visual representations makes explicit the steps taken in going from text to interpretation; removing hierarchy and providing fluidity to the themes which emphasise their inter-connectivity (Attride-Stirling 2001, p.389). As described in Chapter 3 (section 3.6.1), a thematic network is a tool for visual analysis which helps identify, organise, and connect the most common themes in rich, qualitative data (Martin and Hanington 2012, p.178). As a visual tool, it helps unearth salient themes in the narrative data by organising identified themes in levels: basic themes represent the most recurring and lowest order premise, clustered to form organising themes. Organising themes summarise more abstract principles to form an argument or position on a subject, leading to the global theme, which encapsulates the principal metaphor or message in the text as a whole (ibid.).

7.1.1 Evaluating the Knowledge Flows and Contextual Specificities of TNE

During the process of analysing the research findings, Chapter 4 led to the following insights: first, the British Council's definition of a franchise programme, which was adopted for this project, does not acknowledge the contextual specificities of knowledge, suggesting a universal quality of British design education (British Council and McNamara Economic Research 2013, p. 15). Even the most current TNE framework developed by the British Council categorises franchise arrangements as independent academic programmes exported by sending higher education institutes who are primarily responsible for the design, delivery, and external quality assurance (British Council and German Academic Exchange Service 2017, p. 14). In these definitions, the basic premise for an academic franchise partnership suggests a simplistic exchange of knowledge for money in the form of curriculum and student registration fees. Accordingly, the franchise partnership between AOD and Northumbria University, at face value, involves knowledge flowing in one direction from Newcastle to Colombo in the form of a design curriculum written in English, transferred digitally to ensure consistency in educational content.

However, exploring the everyday practice of facilitating TNE at AOD revealed that teaching the transferred curriculum involves various points of friction based on differences which can block the flow and reception of knowledge. Some blocks were practical, such as the lack of institutional facilities. Others were more complex and nuanced in the form of inherent social structures such as the students' prior education and communication skills and the local cultural climate (Heskett, 2015). Stakeholders at AOD spend considerable amounts of time navigating points of friction in the flow of knowledge to create an engaged universal knowledge by considering the social and institutional structures which effect design education in Sri Lanka (Figure 34). As discussed in Chapter 5, *engaged universal knowledge* travels across differences and

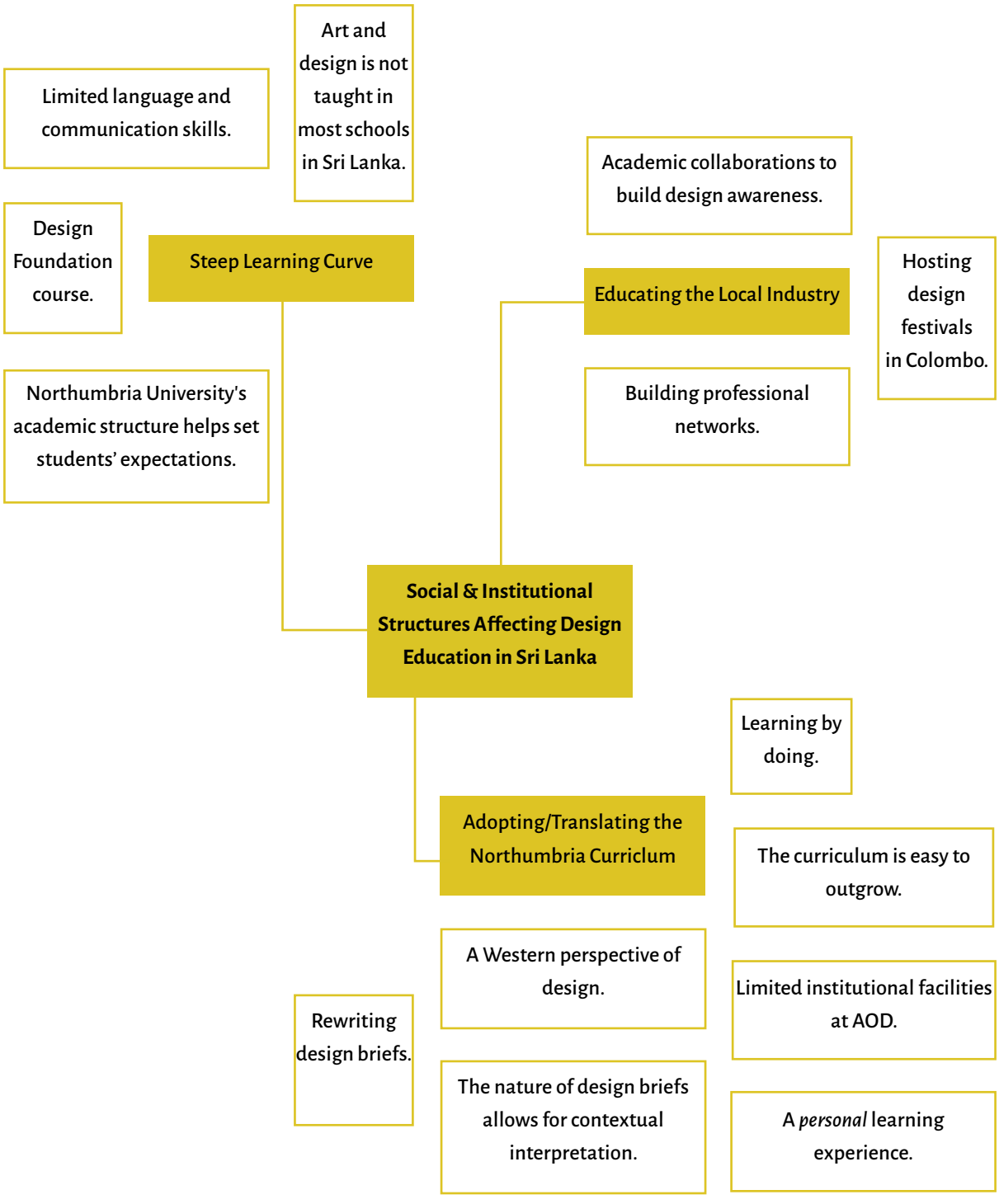


Figure 34 Thematic Network 1, based on Attride-Stirling, 2001, p.388.

engages with cultural friction to make knowledge effective by grounding it in contextual specificities (Tsing, 2005). These actions aid in delivering a design education experience comparable to what students receive on campus at Northumbria University. To answer the question—*how does knowledge really flow in TNE systems?* In the AOD-Northumbria franchise partnership, knowledge flowing from the parent institute must be adapted and translated to navigate frictional roadblocks, which, through translocal interactions, lead to a hybrid design knowledge which is taught in Sri Lanka.

In answer to the next question—*how do TNE systems acknowledge contextual specificities?* The narratives and anecdotes shared in Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate various methods through which staff at AOD adapt the curriculum to suit on-ground realities. For example, the lack of access to certain institutional facilities and resources at AOD are overcome by partnering with the local industry. Students' tacit knowledge, language, and creative skills are taken into consideration when rewriting project briefs and advocating for students' marks during moderation. Academic staff have also developed a design foundation course to manage the creative skills gaps in students enrolling in the BA design programmes from Northumbria University. Overall, contrary to the prescribed definition of a TNE franchise, academic staff at AOD take an active role in shaping the design, delivery, and moderation of the Northumbria design programme (Figure 34).

The everyday practice of facilitating a franchised design curriculum at AOD draws upon the social, economic, and cultural specificities of being situated in Colombo with academic staff working outside the institutional structure of a franchised programme to deliver a locally grounded academic experience to their students. Their actions which address various *points of friction* (Figure 35) create an emergent institutional practice that challenges the perception of franchise programmes defined by the British Council and conceptual frameworks specifying collaborative TNE provision. These seen but unnoticed interventions to the curriculum by academic staff occur in the margins of TNE practice; nonetheless, they are crucial in easing the flow of educational services. The lack of acknowledgement of this work done by academics in a host institute in TNE classification frameworks highlights inconsistencies between prescribed formats and ground realities in facilitating such cross-border systems.

The narrative data from the field research in Newcastle and Colombo and prior studies on TNE (Keay, May and O' Mahony, 2014; Smith, 2017; 2020) lead to a common consensus— communication and relationship building is essential in delivering better TNE programmes. Prof Jennifer Watling, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) at Manchester Metropolitan University, echoed this point when stressing the need for constant communication and having mutually agreed upon goals between sending and host institutes as critical factors for long-term success in transnational education at a recent panel on the future of TNE facilitated by the British Council (2020e).

Communication and the level of engagement of link tutors in sending institutes such as Northumbria plays an intrinsic role in catalysing the agency of members of staff in the host institute to exercise their agency to facilitate curricular reform. By professional agency I mean the autonomy "exercised when professional subjects

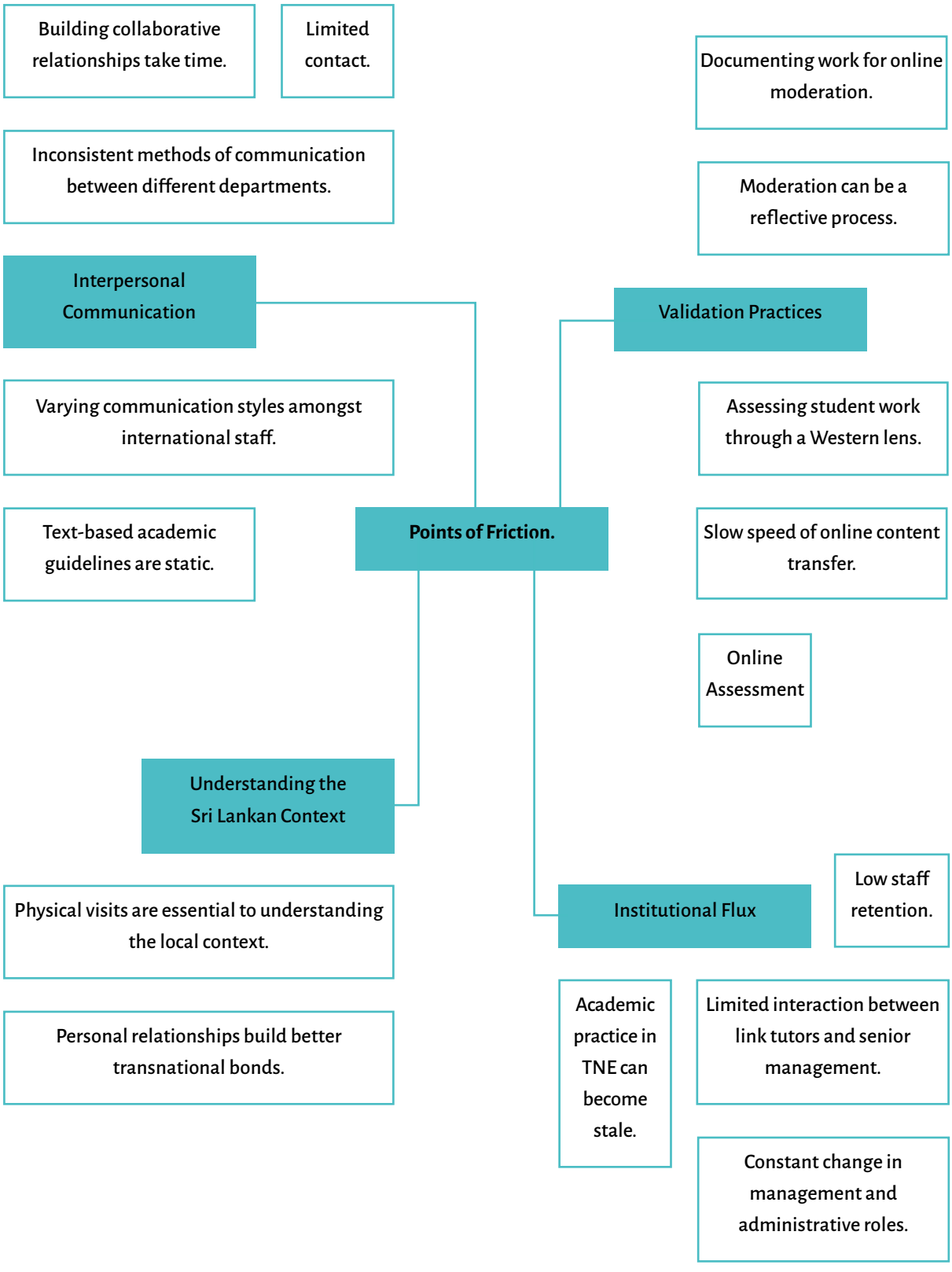


Figure 35 Thematic Network 2, based on Attride-Stirling, 2001, p.388.

and or communities influence, make choices, and take stances on their work and professional identities" (Eteläpelto et al. 2013, p. 61). This definition by Eteläpelto et al. acknowledges that agency can manifest itself in numerous ways. It can involve suggesting new work practices, maintaining existing practices, or in the case of AOD, engaging with points of friction to develop a hybrid design curriculum (Chapter 5).

Professional agency is manifested within official and unofficial power relations of a workspace; an individual's agency is "constrained by chains of command or authority within the structure of businesses and institutions" (Drucker 2017, p. 9). To move past constraining chains of authority, Smith (2020, p. 57) suggests reconfiguring transnational teaching teams by including local tutors to support the development of professional roles and enhance TNE practice. The narratives shared by various members of AOD's academic team suggest that their situated knowledge compels them to enhance TNE practice even though their roles do not require it. At the same time, their narratives exemplify how professional autonomy or internalised agency in an institutional setting varies considerably when the institutional structure of the franchise does not recognise localised work practices.

7.1.2 TNE Partnerships: A Stepping Stone to Institutional Autonomy

Considering the empirical data gathered, although officially classified as a franchise programme, the working relationship between practitioners at AOD and Northumbria University aligns with what the British Council defines as a "partnership programme" where the academic programmes is jointly designed and externally quality assured through collaboration between partner higher education institutes and providers in the host and sending countries (British Council and German Academic Exchange Service, 2014 and 2017). Depending on the quality of individual professional and personal relationships, the AOD and Northumbria staff either work collaboratively or engage in negotiations to adapt and translate the design programme. Especially in cases where relationships with link tutors are a point off friction, the agency of staff at host institutes is vital for the effective facilitation of such cross-border academic systems. Therefore, amplifying the role of professional agency is crucial for developing practitioners' role in professional development, taking initiative, and, most importantly, for renegotiating work-related identities in evolving work practices (Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

In the same vein, Claire, a former employee of AOD with several years' experience in facilitating and administrating the franchise programme with Northumbria, asserts that AOD is an "autonomous brand" rather than a subsidiary of Northumbria University. Previously, she was sure that the partnership with Northumbria was necessary for bringing in students; however, she now believes that AOD will outgrow the need for a foreign partner. "Eventually, I think for quality control and everything I would still like it (the partnership) to be here, but with less restrictions as far as developing curriculum going forward" (Claire, Interview, February 2019). At present, sending institutes, such as Northumbria University, are at the centre with knowledge flowing out to their host institutes, who are at the margins of institutional decision making. However, several staff members echoed Claire's desire for more autonomy in their academic practice, suggesting that host institutes could evolve from the colonial tropes of asymmetrical power relations present in TNE.

Considering the absence of an institutional structure for collaboration in the AOD-Northumbria franchise partnership, Chapter 5 demonstrated how the framework of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) could aid the process of having mutually defined goals and including the perspective of host institutes in developing definitions for diverse modes of TNE delivery. A community of practice can help transnational partners facilitate a more egalitarian academic practice amongst colleagues by acknowledging how agency is practised within a partnership's socio-cultural constraints, availability of resources, and other contextual limits. Wenger (2015) asserts that mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and developing a shared repertoire of practice within a community takes time and sustained interaction. These assertions on developing joint enterprise were also mentioned at the panel on the future of TNE, as mentioned earlier (British Council, 2020e).

The benefit of a community of practice in translocal educational settings is that it allows academics to see past formal structures such as classrooms or institutions and perceive the structures defined by engagement in practice and the informal learning in social spaces (Wenger and Wenger-Trayner 2015, p. 3). As demonstrated in Chapter 5, implicit within the features of a well-formed community of practice is the requirement for members to demonstrate their commitment to the joint venture. In TNE partnerships, the allocation of time for continuous engagement and establishing multiple channels for communication could be a manifestation of such a commitment.

7.2 Navigating a Nascent Creative Industry with Design Agency

A 2017 article by Drucker asks the question—*what does a designer need to know to be part of the field of knowledge design?* As a Distinguished Professor of Information Studies at UCLA, she suggests that intellectual skill over technical know-how and a critical understanding of the concept of agency should be part of a designer's skill set. By changing the focus from TNE facilitators to consumers, the lived experiences of AOD students and graduates in Chapter 6 revealed the challenges they faced in using their design skills to develop their professional practice. The narratives shared during focus group discussions and design workshops described frustrations with low pay scales and employers valuing work experience more than formal education.

In light of a challenging social structure, *how does a TNE experience in design education provide access to communities of design practice?* AOD graduates with a Northumbria University degree in design valued their ability to think critically and facilitate reflexive self-learning as these skills helped navigate an industry that quite often did not value or understand their skills. For students and graduates practising in Sri Lanka, engaging with TNE is an academic experience which helps develop a sense of design agency to adapt to their contextual reality of a nascent creative industry with limited institutional structures such as a local design council to facilitate and advocate for the growth of design practices and mobilise implicit communities of practice (Figure 36).

Another point of consensus amongst students and alumni was that the benefit of a practice-based education in design arms students with a portfolio in addition to a degree certificate; a tangible outcome which other disciplines do not have. However, while a portfolio helps showcase their design skills, it does not guarantee employment. Research participants spoke of not being asked for a portfolio during job interviews

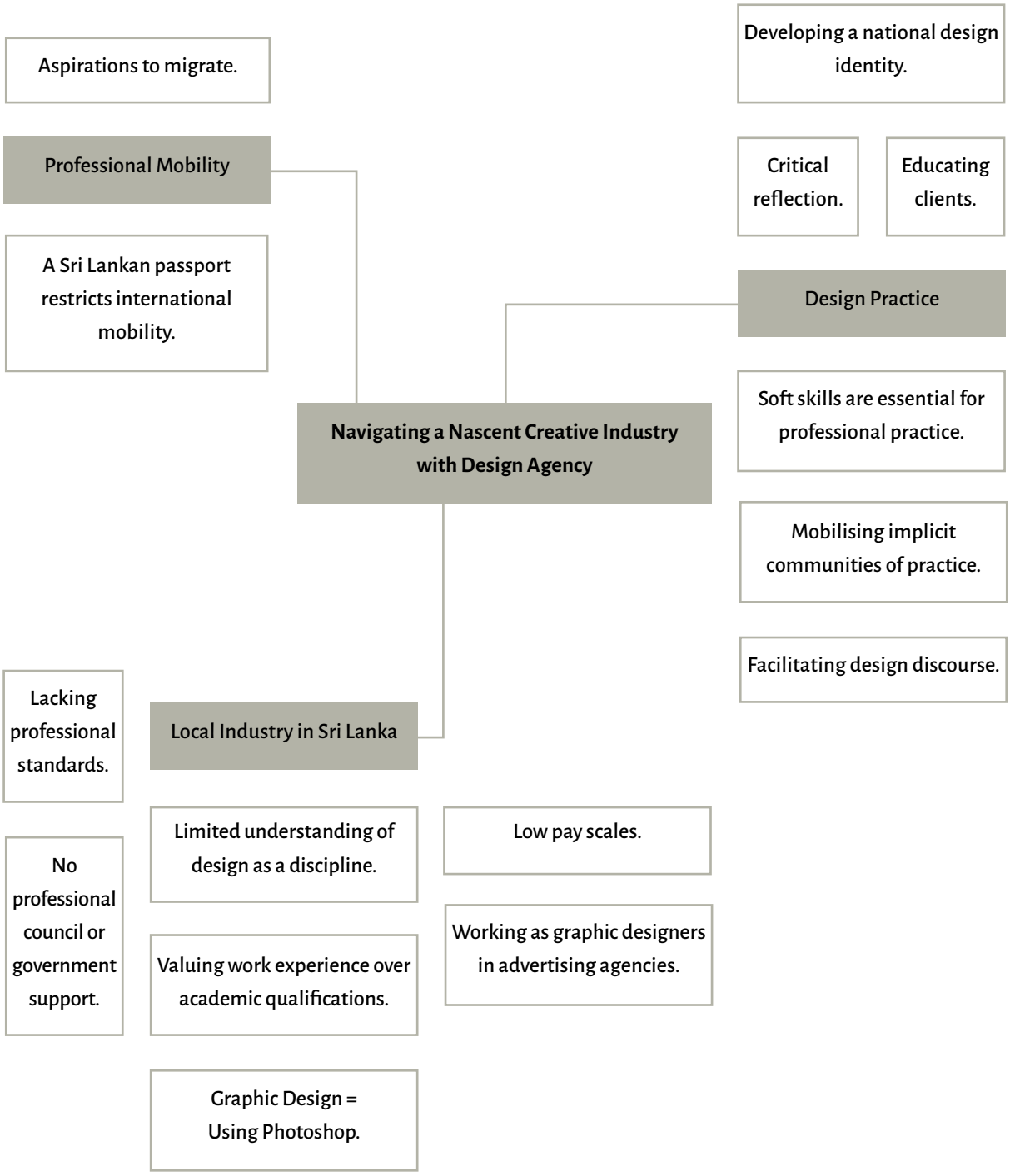


Figure 36 Thematic Network 3, based on Attride-Stirling, 2001, p.388.

and having to rely on their soft skills to secure opportunities for professional practice. In the Sri Lankan context, a design education needs to prepare students to be skilled practitioners and have the agency to promote the social, cultural, and economic value of their skills to their community. As described by Chaturi in the previous chapter (Section 6.5), in addition to offering a design qualification, AOD taught social skills to start a discourse on design in Sri Lanka. However, the design curriculum at Northumbria and the import-export model of TNE do not consider such contextual specificities.

The most common perception of the term design agency relates to an organisation or company which offers professional design services; agency in the context of professional design practice is understood as the capacity to be effective design practitioners (Drucker 2017, p. 9). In the context of AOD students and graduates, I refer to "sentential agency" (Drucker 2017, p. 9) or a self-aware cognition which alludes to Schon's concept of reflective practice (1983) and Uluoglu's description of teaching design by facilitating an intuitive, self-conscious experience (2000) discussed in Chapter 4.

Drucker argues that every approach to design education assumes a model of agency and all models of design practice are dependent on a designer's agency as an autonomous, free-willed individual who is an agent of transformative change while being part of a social system (Drucker, 2017). To become *producing subjects* with power and agency, that is, practitioners who are autonomous, sentient, and free-willed agents; agency must be understood as a product constructed from within the complex social, economic, and cultural systems that designers are a part of. To do so, Drucker (2017, p. 11) suggests calling out the explicit assumptions which are built into the role of design and challenging them. This definition of agency in the context of design practice echoes the colonial understanding of agency to resist imperial powers by those colonised discussed inChapter 2 (Section 2.2.1).

An example of practicing agency to challenge the capitalist discourses of the British graphic design industry is The First Things First manifesto (Garland, K. et al., 1964; Barnbrook, J. et al., 2000; First Things First, 2020). First published in 1963, revisited in 2000, and repurposed with a call to action in 2020, the manifesto is an initiative to challenge how graphic designers approach their position. The first manifesto made the critical distinction of graphic design as communication to convey information as opposed to persuasion. It made a call to move past the trivial matters of advertising, selling cat food, for example, towards contributing to national prosperity by prioritising "more useful and lasting forms of communication" (Garland et al., 1964). The manifesto continues to evolve and adapt to the times as a deliberate attempt to model design agency where ethics and social awareness are integral to a designer's role instead of the manipulative agency of most commercial design. The 2020 edition, for example, focuses on applying design skills towards the climate crisis with clearly articulated guides and educational resources on how to take action (First Things First, 2020).

Resonating with the First Things First manifesto's call to contribute to national prosperity, were the final projects of the graduating graphic design students at AOD in the academic year 2019-20. Some of the students from the small cohort presented

their work in this year's digital Sri Lanka Design Festival, an annual design event organised by AOD (Sri Lanka Design Festival, 2021). Their work demonstrates an inclusive design sensibility to positively impact their communities by using their design skills. Even though the field of graphic design grows and adapts to the changing needs of the global industry, and practitioners sign manifestos challenging the status quo, it is hard to ignore the disciplines' historical roots in mass manufacturing and economic purpose to further the capitalist agenda of limitless growth and consumption (Chapter 2, section 2.5).

AOD's institutional agenda is to train graduates to become professional designers and contribute to Sri Lanka's economic growth and financial prosperity. As mentioned in Chapter 1,for Claire, a former member of the senior management team at AOD, the Institutes purpose is to grow an economy in Colombo (Interview, February 13, 2019). Various members of AOD's academic team felt that as a community of practitioners facilitating a transnational education, their joint enterprise was producing design graduates who can contribute to the creative industries, which made Northumbria University an ideal partner since their design programmes focus on industry practice. However, as indicated by the narrative data in Chapter 6, the industry is not a homogenous place. Graduates from AOD need to intervene and actively adapt to the local industry in Sri Lanka, and such interventions are not always possible through individual agency.

AOD-Northumbria trained graphic designers equipped with critical skills acknowledged the systemic illusions of individual agency promised by their education, particularly in terms of professional mobility and a passport to practice design globally. They also spoke of the need to come together as a community of practitioners and use their collective agency to advocate for the discipline of graphic design and develop a shared discourse reflecting their perspective of the world separate from dominant discourses on design. They spoke of a need for a national council or a local professional body to champion design and promote the social, cultural, and economic value of their skills. The 2020 publication on the creative and cultural industries in Sri Lanka, which included several current and former members of AOD as contributors, made the same recommendation; that is, to develop a strong professional association for the local cultural and creative industries (British Council and Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka 2020, p. 2).

Professional agency is manifested when communities exert influence, make choices, and take stances in ways that affect their work and professional identities (Eteläpelto et al. 2013, p. 62). The initial First Things First manifesto was in reaction to the capitalist agenda at a time when the British economy was booming. Most professional design organisations and associations were formed at a time of prosperity and financial growth (Poynor, 1999). Today, as the world struggles to come to terms with a global pandemic and its uncertain aftermath, a professional graphic design organisation in Sri Lanka will form under entirely different circumstances. This creates a significantly different space in time to capture the collective imagination of a postcolonial society seeking to manifest a locally grounded design agenda in a global design and educational landscape dominated by "developed nations" (UN/DESA, 2014) based in the "global North" (Marks, 2018).

Given the complex, evolving nature of transnational education, this research scratches the surface of the multitude of possibilities for offering novel insights on TNE systems and the potential for adopting qualitative research methodologies which ground practical design research with critical theory. The following sections bring together the objectives of this research project and contributions to knowledge, suggesting how these outcomes might inform TNE practice and future research on design education.

7.3 What is the value of a British design education in Sri Lanka?

The primary research question, which also was put forth to all stakeholders who contributed to this project was— *what is the value of a British design education in a social, economic, and cultural context different from its own?* When I asked this question to one of the participants, they astutely asked, "just to clarify, value for whom?" (Emma, Interview, February 17, 2019). Through this research, I have explored the value of transnational design education systems for those involved in the facilitation and consumption of TNE while also exploring various forms of capital and their implied value: social, economic, and cultural.

As stated in the Introduction, the notion of value is subjective; based on an individual's social and cultural context, some things are valued more than others. Given the diverse group of stakeholders involved in this project, to answer this question, these final sections use Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital; that is a type of capital for which the "social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital" (Bourdieu 2019, p. 81). To recap, the term capital in this expanded form suggests "a collection of goods and skills, of knowledge and acknowledgements, belonging to an individual or a group that he or she can mobilise to develop influence, gain power, or bargain other elements of this collection" (Neveu 2018, p. 1).

Symbolic capital is based on social systems of "knowledge and acknowledgement" (Neveu 2018, p. 359); here it helps articulate how value is assigned differently to a transnational design education from the perspective of diverse stakeholders included in this research, and those identified as influential stakeholders as an outcome of the field research. The list includes: TNE students, parents investing in TNE and privatised design education; design educators who teach and manage a transnational curriculum; academic institutes who form transnational partnerships; and national institutions in Britain and Sri Lanka which make policies on higher education, culture, and design. As the insights are gathered from participants who are active stakeholders, the research is also relevant to each of these stakeholder groups.

7.3.1 Propositions of Cultural Capital

As discussed in Chapter 1, the four levels of motivation for engaging in TNE are: global, national, institutional, and at the individual or practitioner level (Section 1.3.2). At every level, the financial value of TNE to acquire economic capital is straightforward to articulate. As a product of the global knowledge industry, TNE is a commodity to be bought by those who can afford it. The flow of financial capital in exchange for educational services fuels the global economy. At an individual and institutional level, this translates to AOD students paying local tuition and an

additional fee to Northumbria University to be registered as internal students of the university (Chapter 1). This monetary exchange is of clear economic value to AOD and Northumbria University and the British economy in export revenue.

As stated in Chapter 1, in addition to increasing income and student numbers, increasing institutional reputation is another motivation for TNE provision (British Council and Universities UK International Unit 2016, p. 70). Institutional reputation can be considered in terms of symbolic capital accrued by exporting institutes such as Northumbria University; having transnational partners implies a high quality of educational standards being recognised by partner institutes willing to host their programmes. This type of symbolic capital is mutually beneficial in TNE partnerships. Based on its association with Northumbria University, AOD assumes value and cultural capital as a place for quality education by offering students the opportunity to acquire a globally recognised design qualification. The British design degree is meant to act as a guarantee that an AOD-Northumbria graduate has acquired cultural capital which has the potential to facilitate global mobility in the form of "a highly respected design passport to work anywhere in the world" (AOD, 2021).

Based on this symbolic capital, at an institutional level, AOD promotes transnational design education by offering three value propositions: "a financial advantage" (AOD, 2021) to prospective students by saving one-third of the cost of receiving a British degree by studying in Sri Lanka; a future career in design; and a globally recognised qualification that enables professional mobility. Herein lies the contention, the empirical insights from students and graduates reveal that the social and cultural conditions of being Sri Lankan and in Sri Lanka challenge the proposed values of investing in a transnational design education. Specifically, the implied social and cultural capital of a British degree leading to employability, professional mobility, and recognition.

Bourdieu (2019, p.79) states that cultural capital exists in three forms: in the embodied state "in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body"; in the objectified state in the form of various cultural artefacts; and in the institutionalised state which include educational qualifications. Educational qualifications can create cultural capital in two ways: first, the cultural capital sanctioned by legally guaranteed qualifications which are independent of the person who bears the qualification; second, the qualification is presumed to guarantee embodied cultural capital for the person who attains it (Bourdieu, 2019).

In terms of educational qualifications creating cultural capital, TNE students, along with their parents, pay for private education to invest in cultural capital meant to guarantee a future capacity to produce economic capital. As discussed in previous chapters, the AOD website defines the institution as a place that spearheads design initiatives in Sri Lanka to offer professional opportunities to its graduates. The various institutional initiatives by AOD to facilitate discourse on design can be seen as measures to communicate the social and cultural capital of design as a discipline which can, in turn, generate economic capital. This is of immense importance since there cannot be symbolic capital without a social space or audience who recognise or acknowledge the implied value of a form of capital.

7.3.2 Creating Social Value

For AOD students and graduates, the value of transnational design education is not in gaining symbolic cultural capital in an institutionalised state; that is an academic qualification that can be transformed into economic capital through opportunities for professional mobility. The reality is that most AOD graduates work in and around Colombo. Instead, the value of their design education is in developing creative and social skills to devise courses of action to change and shape a local industry which does not always acknowledge the economic or cultural value of design as a discipline. As described in Chapter 6, having a Sri Lankan passport restricts movement, compromising the promise of global professional mobility. However, students and graduates value their TNE experience for the opportunity to access a liberal education which, in addition to design skills, equips them with the soft skills necessary to navigate an unsympathetic local industry which does not always value their academic qualification, negating the notion of qualification holders having an implied cultural capital or professional competence.

Unfortunately, the Northumbria design curriculum does not consider the everyday realities of studying and practicing design in a social space which inhibits the growth of design as a discipline and practice. AOD students and graduates spoke of the social scrutiny and criticism for choosing to pay for a private education in design, being offered low salaries after graduation, and not having a professional association which would set industry standards and offer support. At the same time, graduates of the AOD-Northumbria programme were conscious of their individual, embodied cultural capital acquired through their design education. They spoke of using their acquired knowledge to group together and create social capital which can mobilise local discourses on design in Sri Lanka.

7.3.3 Unrealised Social Capital

In response to institutional and social structures inherent in Sri Lanka, academic staff at AOD work in the margins of a franchise system to adapt the Northumbria design curriculum and offer a contextually relevant, but academically comparable educational experience. Contrary to a statement on their website claiming AOD offers prospective students a "100% internal Northumbria degree experience" (AOD, 2021), AOD offers a hybrid academic experience using the framework of Northumbria's design curriculum with contextually appropriate content (Chapter 4 and 5). These ground realities beg the question of the value in transnational education for academic practitioners at AOD whose everyday practice involves navigating frictions in the system to offer a contextually relevant education to their students.

Based on the narratives of stakeholders at AOD and Northumbria, the potential value lies in developing a community of academic practitioners to develop their shared practice of facilitating transnational design education. To quote Hugo, a former member of AOD's academic team, teaching a franchised programme meant having access to social capital in the form of a network of people, specifically academic staff, who were more experienced,

> I wouldn't say so much Northumbria University, but it was the faculty and the team, they were more knowledgeable and wiser than I was in specific

> areas… That was really helpful, and it was really nice because when it was new (in Colombo), there was no one else to talk about it, so it was really helpful (Interview, February 19, 2019).

Bourdieu has described social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (2019, p. 84); an individual gathers social capital by being part of a valued network. Compared to AOD, Northumbria University has a lot more experience, resources, and staff to develop design curriculum and infrastructure to offer students a quality educational experience. AOD staff see value in being part of that network, learning from a structured curriculum, and having access to resources. However, several members of the academic team agreed that practitioners in Northumbria could also learn from practitioners at AOD. This notion of knowledge exchange, engagement for mutual benefit, and developing a shared repertoire of resources to facilitate TNE is unrealised social capital in cross-border education.

Transnational partnerships have the social infrastructure to move beyond the one-directional flow of knowledge towards a collaborative academic practice to extend current research on design pedagogy and curriculum design. The insights shared by TNE practitioners in AOD suggest the possibility of rethinking the classification frameworks and definitions of TNE not in terms of institutional processes or codes of practice but as communities that develop emergent practices to ease the flow of educational services. Regardless of whether it is recognised or not, practitioners involved in facilitating a TNE curriculum form a community of practice based on their mutual engagement.

By viewing TNE as an incubator for supporting transnational communities of academic practice, the role of a sending institute in a design franchise could be reimagined as a facilitator for situated academic improvisation. As an institution with more experience in developing educational services that serve their contextual needs, an institution like Northumbria University's role in a transnational partnership could create a process for accountability through clear channels of communication, feedback, coordination, and negotiation. The host institute's role would be to engage in meaningful improvisation to offer a bespoke educational experience for students accessing a transnational education and share their innovations with their institutional partners to expand their shared practice of teaching design. The main hurdle to such a reconceptualization of TNE lies in articulating how the symbolic capital of knowledge exchange and advancing academic practice can be transformed into the accumulation of economic capital since the commodification of higher education is rooted in neoliberal capitalism.

In answer to the primary research question, the value of a British design education in Sri Lanka is in offering prospective students the opportunity to access a liberal form of higher education that helps them develop embodied cultural capital of design knowledge, but more importantly, critical and social skills. Their soft skills are manifested as professional agency, which can help promote the social, cultural, and economic value of design and, eventually, develop into social capital.

Additionally, there is an unrealised value in transnational design education—supporting transnational communities of academic practice. By recognising this social capital and encouraging implicit communities of practice at an institutional level, TNE could move past defining hierarchical structures towards a system of shared knowledge and reciprocity.

7.4 Conclusion: Postcolonialism and Globalised Systems of Design Education

This concluding section discusses this project's contribution to postcolonial scholarship and emphasises the value of using postcolonial discourse as a theoretical framework in the study of globalised higher education systems such as TNE. The study of the franchise partnership between AOD and Northumbria University demonstrates how postcolonial theory and its various conceptual frameworks offer a critical research orientation and epistemic perspective where diversity and hybridity are the norm. Accordingly, this research makes an original contribution to knowledge in the following ways:

- By adopting postcolonial discourse as a theoretical lens and including stakeholders based in TNE host institutes as epistemic partners, this research extends literature on the effects of postcolonialism and globalisation on higher education by using the example of transnational design education to highlight the neo-colonial inclinations of British TNE.
- The narratives shared by research participants in Chapters 4—6 offer contextual and nuanced insights into the perceived and potential value of a transnational design education programme. By analysing the empirical data using postcolonial discourses such as *agency* (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Eteläpelto et al., 2013) and *ambivalence* (Bhabha, 1984) along with theoretical ceoncepts such as *friction* (Tsing, 2005) and *Third Space* (Bhabha, 2004), this thesis challenges current definitions for franchised higher education programmes and the promise of a global design education offering a neutral, universal experience to all students and facilitators.
- Finally, the insights presented lead to new avenues of research on the agency of stakeholders based in TNE host institutes and the hybrid academic practices which emerge in the margins of TNE systems.

It is important to note that postcolonial theory is syncretic rather than a single, unitary theoretical framework (Thorpe and Holt, 2008). It is a collection of perspectives and theoretical concepts which capture how colonial, neo-colonial, and postcolonial practices shape contemporary culture, society, and the economy (ibid.). For instance, the work of academics such as Rizvi (Rizvi 2007, Rizvi et al. 2006), Said (2003), and Tikly (1999, 2001, 2004) are critical of Western hegemony in presenting knowledge and power as universal, ahistorical, and inevitable. Their scholarship calls attention to the specificities and nuances of cultural context and the need to acknowledge the critical relationship between culture, politics, and educational curriculum. By drawing on the insights of these scholars, this research extends knowledge on the complex relationship between postcolonialism, globalisation and their effects on design education and practice.

First, adopting postcolonial discourse as a critical lens to researching British TNE systems provided an analytical framework that helped "overcome the ahistoricity of contemporary globalisation/global systems" (Rizvi et al. 2006, p. 249) and identify the inherent coloniality in the definitions of TNE frameworks for knowledge transfer and

facilitation. As discussed in Section 7.1.1, the current definitions for transnational franchise partnerships exemplify Britain's higher education institutions will to power over others by presenting a British education as universal and superior (British Council and McNamara Economic Research, 2013; British Council and German Academic Exchange Service, 2017).

Second, by using the postcolonial state of Sri Lanka as an example, the thesis illustrates that in order to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of transnational design education, a programme needs to be critically contextualised. Situating TNE design programmes can help understand their links to historically produced desires, such as those of postcolonial elites, which are specific to particular localities. However, a postcolonial approach can make space for critically evaluating the appropriateness of any educational programme exported and imposed in a different country or region as it questions context-free rationality.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 demonstrate how ethnographic data can provide a more comprehensive account of how the circumstances of engaging in higher education in nations hosting TNE do not mirror those of exporting nations. By analysing and interpreting narratives that reveal the lived experience of stakeholders engaging in transnational design education through a postcolonial lens, this thesis reveals how not considering the national or regional specificities of culture, economics, and social dynamics to implement a British conception of quality design education does not lead to a standard or universal experience. Instead, it becomes an educational experience that is fraught with friction.

The concept of *friction* (Tsing, 2005) offers a broad and multidimensional framework for understanding the universalising tendency of globalised systems and the contentions in the form of local resistance that can arise as a result of them. Chapters 4 and 5 illuminate how when universalised knowledge systems, such as a transnational design education curriculum, for example, encounter local resistance, it leads to a form of translation or appropriation, creating a hybrid, transient, or contingent universal knowledge, which is paradoxical in that it is no longer uniform. Friction helps highlight the epistemological limitations of universal design knowledge and those who claim it as anything vying for universality is at the cost of silencing local forms of knowledge, power, and resources (Tsing, 2005).

Tsing (2005) developed the concept of *friction* through an ethnographic study of global processes of trade, development and resistance rooted in the complex specifics of communities based in the Kalimantan forests in the Indonesian portion of the island of Borneo. Using the concept of friction in the context of TNE offers new knowledge on how the application of global or universal knowledge, such as transnational design curricula, depends on multiple contingent collaborations that mediate the local and culturally specific. Accordingly, the outcomes of this study suggest that the acknowledgement and evaluation of frictions in academic practice should be critical in facilitating TNE programmes.

The study of friction in this context of power imbalance in the distribution and facilitation of design knowledge also highlights the *agency* (Ashcroft et al., 1998;

Eteläpelto et al., 2013) of stakeholders in TNE host institutes. The hybridisation of academic practices in institutes such as AOD is a product of the frictional, neo-colonial structures of TNE systems. To acknowledge the feeling of ambivalence (Bhabha, 1984) among TNE facilitators and articulate their individual and collective agency, Chapter 5 of this thesis (Section 5.5) uses the postcolonial concept of a Third Space (Bhabha, 2004). Critical theorist Bhabha conceived the concept of a Third Space to give credit to the linguistic agency and negotiation of cultural identity of colonised subjects through forms of engagement that can be antagonistic or affiliative (ibid.). As an analytical framework, the concept helped elaborate and identify the hybrid academic practices developed in the margins of a TNE franchise structure.

The postcolonial scholars cited in this thesis evidence how a postcolonial approach to research can be applied to a range of disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences, such as literary theory, anthropology, and education. By mobilising their perspectives and frameworks, this thesis extends scholarship on the effects of postcolonialism on globalised education by offering empirical insights on the neo-colonial nature of transnational design education. As the narrative data illustrates, adopting postcolonial discourses and frameworks to study the facilitation of transnational design education can confront the field's hegemonic structures and offer new knowledge on TNE host institutions as spaces of radical hybridity which confront Western hegemony in the global production and distribution of knowledge. Examining TNE through a postcolonial lens can help catalyse a collective reimagining of globalised education systems by acknowledging their neo-colonial nature and identifying pedagogical practices which challenge their structures to offer a more valuable and contextually relevant higher education experience.

7.5 Reflections: Research Limitations and Future Prospects

While reflecting on my experience of carrying out this research and contributing to knowledge within the framework of a doctoral programme, there are certain limitations in this project regarding the research participants, project resources, and changing circumstance of higher education due to a global pandemic that require consideration. The structure of a three-year doctoral project and being the sole researcher involves limited resources, particularly in terms of time and funds for cross-continental field research. As visualised in the empirical data chart (Chapter 3, section 3.5.3), I made multiple visits to Newcastle and Colombo over three years to ensure longitudinal engagement with my participants. As this research focused on facilitating TNE from a host institute's perspective, I spent more time at AOD compared to Northumbria University. My insider's perspective and the established network of stakeholders allowed for in-depth research insights from the enlisted participants in short bursts of time. However, it did not allow for the inclusion of stakeholders outside those formally invited to contribute to the research.

While the list of stakeholders invited to participate in the empirical study represent a diverse range of perspectives; adopting a para-ethnographic approach, where the participants become epistemic partners, revealed limitations in this research. First, the mapping exercise described in Chapter 3 (section 3.5.3) revealed stakeholders I had not considered in the research design. The initial list of stakeholders provided for the maps included: senior management; academic staff; administrative staff;

current students; alumni; the local industry; and resource staff. Based on the exercise's outcome, the following groups were identified as additional stakeholders with the power to influence institutional change: parents of students who study at private academic institutions; the finance and marketing teams at privatised academic institutions; and on one occasion friends and acquaintances of students. The inclusion of these stakeholder groups and their responses to the various lines of inquiry could have led to other emergent paths of inquiry or contrasting results.

However, as little research exists on transnational design education from the perspective of TNE stakeholders based in host institutes, a gap which this study helps to fill, the limitations of this project and the evolving nature of the subject lead to questions and opportunities for future research. To start with— *what is the value of a design qualification in Sri Lanka?*

As suggested by various participants, parents who pay tuition for their children to access a transnational design education and members of the local industry who hire students graduating from such institutions are key stakeholders who shape the symbolic value of these social institutions. Engaging these stakeholders can help provide more comprehensive insights into the perceived value or social capital of design in Sri Lanka. Such insights could help identify unknown frictions, potentially leading to productive insights on how to shift perceptions and make the discipline and design education more valued to the Sri Lankan community and economy.

Second, several academic staff spoke of their frustrations with the academic moderation and institutional interaction between AOD and Northumbria University being digital, whereas design and studio practice is tactile and hard to translate digitally (Chapter 5). These opinions were based on their online interactions pre-COVID 19, when online or hybrid interactions were not a priority. Today, all academic institutions worldwide have been forced to adapt to a digital, hybrid academic practice. Studying the implications of online delivery in design institutions could lead to new institutional practices for TNE partnerships in design and raises the following question— *how does the move to online academic practice in British universities impact the development of collaborative communities of practice with their TNE partners?* Additionally, *how does a move to blended and hybrid models of teaching and learning for design programmes in British universities affect students in TNE host institutes?*

Finally, several research participants in Sri Lanka spoke of the importance of establishing a design identity that is authentic to the country. Concurrently, academic staff at AOD spoke of developing an independent institutional identity. Discussions around having the autonomy to develop pedagogy that is sympathetic to the South Asian student body and not being constrained by a franchised curriculum leads to the question— *how can transnational franchises become independent, accredited design institutes in Sri Lanka?*

I set out with the aim to contribute to knowledge by filling a gap in the literature on transnational education systems, that is, offering the perspective of stakeholders based in TNE host institutes. My objective as a design researcher with an inside perspective of facilitating TNE was to provide nuanced insights on the complexities

of facilitating a franchised design education from the perspective of practitioners actively engaged in this type of translocal practice. Additionally, as a tuition paying international student, I was interested in understanding the value derived from a transnational design education for students who invest in this type of educational service. The theoretical lens of postcolonial discourse and the qualitative methodology adopted for the project allowed for collaboration between ethnography, participatory design methods, and critical theory, leading to an interdisciplinary research project.

The project's interdisciplinary nature has made me reflect on the development of my professional practice as a visual communication designer and researcher. Using ethnographic and participatory research methods revealed complexities and emergent practices in educational systems which challenge established policies and institutional structures. For example, the participatory mapping exercise (Chapter 3) helped visually validate that transnational academic systems are complex entities with stakeholders having diverse views on power relations based on their individual experience. While official accounts of hierarchical structures at an institutional level can help streamline work processes, they do not necessarily reflect the on-ground realities of stakeholders' perspectives. Collating all the maps made by participants provides visual evidence of differences in perceptions on the ground compared to 'official' accounts of hierarchies between this particular cross-border partnership. Given the new global context of closed borders and most work practices moving online, I am interested to explore hybrid methods of co-creation in participatory design research.

Using the critical lens of postcolonial discourse helped highlight various frictions in academic practice which challenge the colonial tropes of knowledge flows in franchise programmes. Adopting this theoretical framework also helped reveal insights on emergent practices of teaching and learning a transnational design curriculum. Grounding participatory research with critical theory was a valuable experience in learning how to frame problems, not in abstracts, but the everyday realities of negotiating differences in systems of educational trade which encourage standardisation. A postcolonial approach to research facilitates discourses and practices which can produce a more equitable relationship between people from diverse parts of the world. In this project, it helps highlight how TNE host institutes, which, so far, have been on the periphery of the global knowledge industry, can be spaces in transition to challenge Western epistemic dominance. In the trade of design education, engaged stakeholders in host institutes have the potential to use their agency, not to be subsidiaries of their partners, but gain autonomy by constructing a hybrid identity based on the terms of their TNE structures and their contextually specific lived experience.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Planning and Organising the Field Research

1.1 Level 2 Research Ethics approval, 2018.
1.2 Participant Information Sheet
1.3 Participant Consent Form
1.4 Field Research Questionnaires
1.5 Colombo Field Research Schedule

Appendix 2: From the Field

2.1 Level 6 Module Guide, BA (Hons) Graphic Design, Northumbria University
2.2 Level 6 Project Brief, BA (Hons) Graphic Design, Northumbria University,
2.3 Level 6 Module Guide, BA (Hons) Graphic Design department, AOD
2.4 Level 6 Project Brief, BA (Hons) Graphic Design, AOD
2.5 Suggested Reading List, Northumbria-AOD Graphic Design Programme
2.6 AOD Programme Leaders Meeting Agenda

Level 2 approval

COX NEIL <[redacted]>

Fri 25/05/2018 13:02

To: BAGCHI Pushpi <[redacted]>
Cc: [redacted]>; MATOS Sonia <[redacted]>; HOLLIS Edward <[redacted]>; HARKNESS Rachel <[redacted]>

Dear Pushpi

I am happy to confirm that your level 2 form, which you completed fully and explains your project clearly, is approved. The only other thing that is probably worth doing is to have a brief conversation with Alastair Brown, the ECA Health and Safety officer, who can also check on the need for a risk assessment on your trip.

With best wishes

Neil

Neil Cox
Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art
ECA Director of Postgraduate Research
Edinburgh College of Art
University of Edinburgh
O.60 Hunter Building
Lauriston Place
EH3 9DF

Appendix 1.1 Level 2 Research Ethics approval, 2018.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Trading Design Education
Researcher: Pushpi Bagchi, PhD Design Student p.bagchi@ed.ac.uk
Supervisory Team: Prof. Ed Hollis, Dr Rachel Harkness, and Dr Sonia Matos

You have been invited to take part in a research study on transnational design education. Pushpi Bagchi, a PhD Design student at the University of Edinburgh is the primary investigator in this research. Before you decide to take part it is important you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

RESEARCH AIMS
This project is researching British transnational design education and critically evaluating established systems for building cross-border higher education partnerships. The primary research question navigating the project is–

> *What is the value of a British design education in a social, economic, and cultural context different from its own?*

The initial research on the current landscape of British transnational education has revealed that the subject has been predominantly explored using quantitative methods and from a Western perspective. This project intends to make a contribution to knowledge by offering qualitative insights on transnational design education from the perspective of the host institute, which so far, has been an under-researched domain. Additionally, the project seeks to identify methods which can facilitate knowledge exchange between partner institutes through communities of practice.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?
Using postcolonial discourse as a theoretical lens, this study will use qualitative, ethnographic methods to study the partnership between AOD and Northumbria University. The intention of the multi-sited ethnography is to observe and communicate the complexity of facilitating an academic partnership involving multiple stakeholders and understand the perceived value of transnational design education from the perspective of different stakeholders.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?
You have been invited to participate in this study because you are or have been directly involved in the transnational design education partnership between AOD and Northumbria University.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?
No – it is entirely up to you. If you do decide to take part, please keep this Information Sheet and complete the Participant Consent Form to show that you understand your rights in relation to the research and that you are happy to participate. If you do decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Deciding not to take part or withdrawing from the study will not affect you in any way.

WHAT TO EXPECT:
You will be asked a series of questions regarding the value of transnational design education and participate in a short design exercise titled A Passport To Design Practice. The focus group will take place in a safe environment in Colombo at a time that is convenient for you. All verbal responses will be recorded (upon consent), so the location will be in a fairly quiet area. The focus group should take around 2 hours to complete. There will be five to six participants in each focus group discussion and catering will be provided during the session.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?
By sharing your experiences, you will be helping the lead researcher better understand the complexity of facilitating an academic partnership involving multiple stakeholders, the values associated with British design education in a different context and opinions on higher education internationalisation from the perspective of different stakeholders.

Appendix 1.2 Example of a Participant Information Sheet, Page 1.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH TAKING PART?

There are no known risks associated with taking part in this study. Additionally, the Research Ethics Committee at Edinburgh College of Art has reviewed and approved this ethnographic study. The only benefits to you personally are those you might draw from making a contribution to knowledge.

WHAT IF I WANT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Agreeing to participate in this project does not oblige you to remain in the study nor have any further obligation to this study. If, at any stage, you no longer want to be part of the study, please inform the researcher, Pushpi Bagchi (p.bagchi@ed.ac.uk). You should note that your data may be used in the production of formal research outputs (e.g. journal articles, conference papers, theses and reports) prior to your withdrawal and so you are advised to contact the researcher at the earliest opportunity should you wish to withdraw from the study. On specific request, all your identifiable answers will be destroyed, but the researcher will need to use the data collected prior to your withdrawal and maintain the records of your consenting participation.

DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The following types of data will be collected during the ethnographic study: voice recordings from the focus group discussions which will be transcribed; visual or textual responses generated from the group discussions; photographs of the participatory sessions but these will be of artefacts created and not people; field notes. Names and other easily identifiable information will be removed from the transcripts and all data collected will be anonymised. However, as the research involves group discussions your participation and contribution will be known to some of the other participants.

Your data will be processed in accordance with Data Protection Law and all information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. Your data will only be viewed by the researcher and the supervisory team. All electronic data will be stored on a secure cloud server provided by the University of Edinburgh and all paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Your consent information will be kept separately from your responses in order to minimise risk.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY?

The results of this study may be summarised in published articles, reports and presentations. Quotes or key findings will always be made anonymous in any formal outputs unless we have your prior and explicit written permission to attribute them to you by name.

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

If you have any questions about the study, at a future date, please contact the lead researcher. If you wish to make a complaint about the study, please contact Fiona Hunter (ecaresearchdegrees@ed.ac.uk), Postgraduate Research Programme Secretary for the Design department at Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. In your communication, please provide the study title and detail the nature of your complaint.

Appendix 1.2 Example of a Participant Information Sheet, Page 2.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Trading Design Education **Please initial box**

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study.	
I have been given the opportunity to consider the information provided, ask questions and have had these questions answered to my satisfaction.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can ask to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without my legal rights being affected.	
I understand that my anonymised data will be stored for the duration of this PhD project.	
I agree to audio recordings of the discussion and all artefacts produced as a result of this session being collected by the lead researcher.	
I agree to take part in this study.	

☐ Tick here if you would like to receive a copy of the research report which will be written by the lead researcher at the end of the study.

Name of person giving consent **Signature & Date**

_____ _____

Name of person taking consent **Signature & Date**

_____ _____

Appendix 1.3 Example of a Participant Consent Form.

Part 1 - Interview and Focus Group Participants | AOD Academic, Administrative, and Management Staff + Alumni

Theme - perspectives on the value of British design education in Sri Lanka.

What is the value of a British design education in a social, economic, and cultural context different from its own?

1. UNESCO Definition of TNE (UNESCO-CEPES 2001, p.8)

Transnational education or TNE involves all types of higher education programmes in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.

- Does this definition sound familiar (true to your experience at AOD)?

- What were your expectations of this type of hybrid academic structure, i.e. British design education being taught in Sri Lanka?

- What were some of your motivations to join AOD?

- What did/do you like best about the AOD-NU design programme?

2. Values of a foreign HE degree in Sri Lanka according to the National Education Council (National Education Commission Sri Lanka, 2007)

- Providing education opportunities to those who were not offered positions at local universities because of limited seats.
- Helps ease unemployment as graduates with foreign degrees are readily absorbed by the corporate sector within Sri Lanka and abroad.
- Reduced costs for the government and in turn the taxpayer as only the individual student has to bear the cost of tuition.
- Better earning capacity for graduates as employers see foreign degrees as better credentials as well as a capacity to learn.

- How do you respond to these stated benefits of a foreign degree in Sri Lanka?

3. The effects of colonialism on the perception of the West (Tikly, 1998)

Postcolonialism can be described as a general condition or shift in the cultural, political, and economic arrangements that arise from the experiences of European colonialism in both formerly colonised and colonising countries.

- How do you think being a former British colony has shaped Sri Lanka's perception of Western education?

- How would you describe the nature of the AOD and NU relationship?

- How does Northumbria University influence AOD's value as a design school?

4. Internationalisation and AOD

Internationalisation is a systemic effort to make higher education responsive to the challenges and requirements of globalised societies and world markets. It involves national higher education institutes integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension to the purpose and delivery of higher education to enhance teaching and learning (Knight, 2004).

- What are some of the ways in which AOD is 'interntional'?

- How is AOD Sri Lankan?

5. Summary of the key points made in the discussion so far–

- Do you agree with the key points/themes mentioned in the summary? Would you like to make any changes or additions?

Appendix 1.4 Field research questionnaires.

Part 2 - Interview Participants | AOD Academic, Administrative, and Management Staff

Theme - everyday realities of facilitating TNE partnerships.

1. British Council Definition of a TNE franchise (British Council & McNamara Economic Research, 2013)exploring themes of power and autonomy:

A TNE franchise partnership is one where a sending higher education institute authorises a host institute to deliver its programme, with no curricular input by the host institution and all study taking place in the host country.

- As staff working in a franchised TNE partnership, what is your opinion of this definition?

- Do you think this definition encapsulates the reality of the AOD and NU partnership?

- How would you describe the perfect transnational education partnership?

2. Wegner's definition of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) exploring the theme of shared development–

A community of practice consists of practitioners who share a concern for the work they do and develop a repertoire of resources, experiences, and tools to evolve their shared practice.

- What activities or aspects of the AOD-NU partnership exemplify a community of academic practice?

- Can there be an egalitarian community of practice in an academic system where there is a one-sided transfer of knowledge?

3. Features of a well-formed community of practice by Wenger exploring inequality of power.

- Sustained mutual relationships - harmonious or conflictual.
- Shared ways of engagement and doing things together.
- The rapid flow of information and innovation.
- An absence of introductory preambles. Interactions appear as a continuation of an ongoing process.
- Very quick set up of a problem to be discussed.
- Substantial overlap in participants' description of who belongs.
- Knowing what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise.
- Mutually defining identities.
- An ability to assess the appropriateness of actions and products.
- Specific tools or other artefacts.
- Local lore, shared stories, or inside jokes.
- Jargon and shortcuts to communication.
- Certain styles recognised as displaying membership.
- A shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective on the world.

- Are any of these features practised or reflected in the AOD-NU academic partnership?

- Would you like to see any of these features be further developed in the partnership?

4. Tovey (2015) on international communities of practice identifying gaps in academci practice -

For an international community (of practice) to function it is important that there is communication between its members.

- Are there any other features or activities that might enhance the functioning of this type of academic partnership?

5. The cost of maintaining 'global standards' (Appadurai, 2012)–

The rapid expansion of higher education sectors in developing nations is to supply the demand for a skilled workforce to assist the economic development of these countries. This is happening at the cost of liberal learning, research development, and academically free and independent universities in the global south. This can potentially involve sacrificing vernacular knowledge systems so education institutes can adhere to Western standards to compete in global markets.

- Do you agree? How does this expectation to meet global or Western standards affect AOD as a design institute?

Appendix 1.4 Field research questionnaires, continued.

Part 2 - Focus Group Participants | AOD Alumni

Theme - Design education providing a passport to practice.

1. The end goal for design students is to achieve a level of capability to function as designers in their professional community of practice. It is vital that their education helps them construct a 'passport' to enter this community (Tovey, 2015).

- Do you agree with Tovey?

2. For many design students, the portfolio is the physical manifestation of their passport to design practice (Tovey, 2015).

- Do you agree?

3. Definition of a Passport:

Noun – a thing that ensures admission to or the achievement of something (google.com).

- How does a portfolio reflect how qualified you are to practice?

- How does your portfolio determine your access or admission to your field of professional practice?

4. Theme - aspirations and motivations to "go global".

- What is your dream job?

- Does being a Graphic Designer provide access to a global or international community of practice?

- What are some other ways of gaining access to a wider community of design practice or practitioners?

5. Design Challenge - Conceptualise and prototype a passport to design practice.

- **Consider a wide interpretation of a passport.**
- **Define a context for its use.**
- **Decide on the content of the passport.**
- **Identify an audience. Who will acknowledge the passport?**
- **Prototype a concept and present it to the group.**
- **Identify an audience, who will acknowledge the passport?**
- **Prototype a design.**

Part 3- The Perception of Power

All Participants - AOD Academic and Management Staff + Alumni + Students (Interviews + Focud Groups + Workshops)

List of Stakeholders: Current Students; Senior Management; Administrative Staff; Alumni; Academic Staff; Resource Staff; Industry

- Amongst these stakeholders directly involved in the AOD and Northumbria partnership, who do you think has the most power or influence to affect change?

- Order the list with those having the most influence placed towards the centre or core and those having less influence towards the outer edges.

- Is there anyone missing from the list of stakeholders?

Appendix 1.4 Field research questionnaires, continued.

Design Workshop with AOD Students - 2.5 hours

Theme - Design education providing a passport to practice.

1. The end goal for design students is to achieve a level of capability to function as designers in their professional community of practice. It is vital that their education helps them construct a 'passport' to enter this community (Tovey, 2015).

- Do you agree with Tovey?

2. For many design students, the portfolio is the physical manifestation of their passport to design practice (Tovey, 2015).

- Do you agree?

3. Definition of a Passport:

Noun – a thing that ensures admission to or the achievement of something (google.com).

- How does a portfolio reflect (show) how qualified you are to practice?

- How will your portfolio determine your access or admission to your field of professional practice/industry?

4. Theme - aspirations and motivations to "go global".

- What is your dream job among your professional community of practitioners?

- Does being a Graphic Designer provide access to a global or international community of practice?

5. UNESCO Definition of TNE (UNESCO-CEPES 2001, p.8)

Transnational education or TNE involves all types of higher education programmes in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.

- As students/graduates equipped with the knowledge of British design education in Sri Lanka, how is your passport to practice valued by your local communities of professional practice?

6. Internationalisation and AOD (Knight, 2004)

Internationalisation is a systemic effort to make higher education responsive to the challenges and requirements of globalised societies and world markets. It involves national higher education institutes integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension to the purpose and delivery of higher education to enhance teaching and learning.

- What are some of the ways in which AOD is 'international'?

- How is AOD Sri Lankan?

7. Theme - aspirations and motivations.

- **What are some other ways of gaining access to a wider community of design practice or practitioners?**

8. Design Challenge - Conceptualise and prototype a passport to design practice.

- **Consider a wide interpretation of a passport.**
- **Define a context for its use.**
- **Decide on the content of the passport.**
- **Identify an audience. Who will acknowledge the passport?**
- **Prototype a concept and present it to the group.**
- **Identify an audience, who will acknowledge the passport?**
- **Prototype a design.**

Appendix 1.4 Field research questionnaires, continued.

Interview Participants | Northumbria University Academic and Management Staff

Theme - perspectives on the value of British design education in Sri Lanka.

What is the value of a British design education in a social, economic, and cultural context different from its own?

1. UNESCO Definition of TNE (UNESCO-CEPES 2001, p.8)

Transnational education or TNE involves all types of higher education programmes in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.

- Does this definition sound true to your experience of working with AOD and other partner institutes?

- What were your expectations of this type of hybrid academic structure, i.e. British design education being taught in alternative social, cultural and economic contexts?

- What do you think is the most valuable aspect or feature of cross border British design programmes?

2. The effects of colonialism on the perception of the West (Tikly, 1998)

Postcolonialism can be described as a general condition or shift in the cultural, political, and economic arrangements that arise from the experiences of European colonialism in both formerly colonised and colonising countries.

- Based on your experience, how do you think being former colonies has shaped Asia's perception of Western education?

- How does Northumbria University influence AOD's value as a design school?

3. Internationalisation and AOD (Knight, 2004)

Internationalisation is a systemic effort to make higher education responsive to the challenges and requirements of globalised societies and world markets. It involves national higher education institutes integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension to the purpose and delivery of higher education to enhance teaching and learning.

- In your opinion, what is Northumbria University's motivation to engage in transnational education?

- What are some of the ways in which Northumbria University is 'international'?

- Are British design standards international?

Theme - everyday realities of facilitating TNE partnerships.

1. British Council Definition of a TNE franchise (British Council & McNamara Economic Research, 2013)exploring themes of power and autonomy:

A TNE franchise partnership is one where a sending higher education institute authorises a host institute to deliver its programme, with no curricular input by the host institution and all study taking place in the host country.

- As someone who works towards facilitating a franchised TNE partnership, what is your opinion of this definition?

- Do you think this definition encapsulates the reality of the AOD and Northumbria University partnership?

- How would you describe the perfect transnational education partnership?

- How do you learn from your experience at AOD?

2. Wegner's definition of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) exploring the theme of shared development–

A community of practice consists of practitioners who share a concern for the work they do and develop a repertoire of resources, experiences, and tools to evolve their shared practice.

- What activities or aspects of the AOD-NU partnership exemplify a community of academic practice?

- Can there be an egalitarian community of practice in an academic system, i.e. franchise partnerships, where there is a one-sided flow of knowledge?

Appendix 1.4 Field research questionnaires, continued.

3. Features of a well-formed community of practice by Wenger exploring inequality of power.

- Sustained mutual relationships - harmonious or conflictual.
- Shared ways of engagement and doing things together.
- The rapid flow of information and innovation.
- An absence of introductory preambles. Interactions appear as a continuation of an ongoing process.
- Very quick set up of a problem to be discussed.
- Substantial overlap in participants' description of who belongs.
- Knowing what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise.
- Mutually defining identities.
- An ability to assess the appropriateness of actions and products.
- Specific tools or other artefacts.
- Local lore, shared stories, or inside jokes.
- Jargon and shortcuts to communication.
- Certain styles recognised as displaying membership.
- A shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective on the world.

- Are any of these features practised or reflected in the AOD-Northumbria University academic partnership?

- Would you like to see any of these features be further developed in the partnership?

4. Tovey (2015) on international communities of practice identifying gaps in academci practice -

For an international community (of practice) to function it is important that there is communication between its members.

- Are there any other features or activities that might enhance the functioning of this type of academic partnership?

- How do you learn from your TNE partnerhips?

5. The cost of maintaining 'global standards' (Appadurai, 2012)–

The rapid expansion of higher education sectors in developing nations is to supply the demand for a skilled workforce to assist the economic development of these countries. This is happening at the cost of liberal learning, research development, and academically free and independent universities in the global south. This can potentially involve sacrificing vernacular knowledge systems so education institutes can adhere to Western standards to compete in global markets.

- Do you agree? How does this expectation to meet global or Western standards affect transnational partner institutes such as AOD?

6. Summary of the key points made in the discussion so far–

- Do you agree with the key points/themes mentioned in the summary? Would you like to make any changes or additions?

The Perception of Power

List of Stakeholders: Current Students; Senior Management; Administrative Staff; Alumni; Academic Staff; Resource Staff; Industry

- **Amongst these stakeholders directly involved in the AOD and Northumbria partnership, who do you think has the most power or influence to affect change?**

- Order the list with those having the most influence placed towards the centre or core and those having less influence towards the outer edges.

- Is there anyone missing from the list of stakeholders?

	2/11 MONDAY	2/12 TUESDAY	2/13 WEDNESDAY	2/14 THURSDAY	2/15 FRIDAY	2/16 SATURDAY	2/17 SUNDAY
8:00 AM		Interview 1. Coffee Bean, Maitlad Crescent	**Full Day at AOD.**	**Full Day at AOD.**	**Full Day at AOD.**		
8:30 AM					Research Workshop with L4 Graphic Design students. Graphic Studio 1, AOD		
9:00 AM							Interview 5. The English Cake Company
9:30 AM						Focus Group Session 1. Geek HQ.	
10:00 AM							
10:30 AM							
11:00 AM							
11:30 AM			Research Workshop with L6 Graphic Design students. Graphic Studio 2, AOD	Research Workshop with L5 Graphic Design students. Graphic Studio 2, AOD			
12:00 PM					Screen Printing Workshop with L4 students. Screen Printing Studio, AOD		
12:30 PM							
1:00 PM							
1:30 PM							
2:00 PM							
2:30 PM							
3:00 PM							
3:30 PM							
4:00 PM							
4:30 PM			Interview 3. Urban Island	Interview 4. Dutch Burgher Union Cafe			Interview 6. At the participant's home.
5:00 PM	**Arrive in Colombo**	Interview 2. At the participant's home.					
5:30 PM							
6:00 PM							
6:30 PM							
7:00 PM							

	2/18 MONDAY	2/19 TUESDAY	2/20 WEDNESDAY	2/21 THURSDAY	2/22 FRIDAY	2/23 SATURDAY	2/24 SUNDAY
8:00 AM	**Full Day at AOD.**	POYA - Holiday	**Full Day at AOD.**	**Full Day at AOD.**	**Full Day at AOD.**		Out of Colombo.
8:30 AM	Research Workshop with Design Foundation students. Foundation Studio, AOD.		Research Workshop with Design Foundation students. Foundation Studio, AOD.	Research Workshop with Design Foundation students. Foundation Studio, AOD.			
9:00 AM							
9:30 AM							
10:00 AM							
10:30 AM							
11:00 AM		Interview 8. At the participant's home.					
11:30 AM					Screen Printing Workshop with L4 students. Screen Printing Studio, AOD		
12:00 PM			Research Workshop with Design Foundation students. Foundation Studio, AOD.	Research Workshop with Design Foundation students. Foundation Studio, AOD.			
12:30 PM							
1:00 PM							
1:30 PM	Interview 7, Part 1. Meeting Room, AOD.				Interview 7, Part 2. Meeting Room, AOD.		
2:00 PM							
2:30 PM					Screen Printing Workshop with L4 students. Screen Printing Studio, AOD		
3:00 PM							
3:30 PM							
4:00 PM							
4:30 PM							
5:00 PM							
5:30 PM							
6:00 PM							
6:30 PM							
7:00 PM							

Appendix 1.5 Colombo field research schedule, February and March 2019.

	2/25 MONDAY	2/26 TUESDAY	2/27 WEDNESDAY	2/28 THURSDAY	3/1 FRIDAY	3/2 SATURDAY	3/3 SUNDAY
8:00 AM	Out of Colombo.	Day at AOD		Out of Colombo.			
8:30 AM							
9:00 AM							
9:30 AM							
10:00 AM							
10:30 AM							
11:00 AM							
11:30 AM							
12:00 PM							
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4:00 PM							
4:30 PM							
5:00 PM							
5:30 PM							
6:00 PM							
6:30 PM							
7:00 PM							

	3/4 MONDAY	3/5 TUESDAY	3/6 WEDNESDAY	3/7 THURSDAY	3/8 FRIDAY	3/9 SATURDAY	3/10 SUNDAY
8:00 AM	**Full Day at AOD.**	**Full Day at AOD.**	**Full Day at AOD.**	**Full Day at AOD.**	**Full Day at AOD.**		
8:30 AM							
9:00 AM	AOD Staff Meeting - Programme Leaders		AOD Staff Meeting - Administrative and Resource Staff				
9:30 AM		Presentation on D&AD competition win by a Junior Art Director from Leo Burnett, Sri Lanka.					
10:00 AM							
10:30 AM							
11:00 AM							
11:30 AM		Screen Printing Workshop with L4 students. Screen Printing Studio, AOD			Screen Printing Workshop with L4 students. Screen Printing Studio, AOD		
12:00 PM						Focus Group Session 2. Graphics Studio 1, AOD.	
12:30 PM							
1:00 PM	AOD Staff Meeting - Module Tutors + Part time staff						
1:30 PM							
2:00 PM							
2:30 PM				Research Presentation to Graphic Design Students			
3:00 PM							
3:30 PM							
4:00 PM							
4:30 PM							**Depart from Colombo.**
5:00 PM							
5:30 PM							
6:00 PM							
6:30 PM							
7:00 PM							

Appendix 1.5 Colombo field research schedule, February and March 2019.

Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

Module Information
Level 6, Semester 1, 2019
40 Credits - 400hrs of Study

Module title
GD6001 - Experiential & Collaborative Branding in Graphic Design

Module contacts
[redacted]

BA (Hons) GRAPHIC DESIGN & BRANDING

Module Guide

Module Overview

What it's all about

Synopsis of module:
To explore and develop an advanced knowledge and intellectual understanding of Branding for an environmental and experiential application, exploring customer journey, touch points and way-finding. To further develop team-working skills, through ongoing negotiation, coordination, task management and collaboration.

This module will also include intellectually stimulating and complex professional 'live briefs' - projects set by industry professionals, professional bodies, or related organisations.

The assessment will be based on the expertise, consideration, appropriateness and innovation to which students answer visually and intellectually complex design problems.

The aim of this module is:
The module will foster collaboration and a deeper understanding of intellectual and visual problem solving within the context of Branding.

Students will continue to develop a professional and intellectual understanding of their creative processes through an authentic experience of reflection, presentation and creative process, mirroring industry practice and intellectual processes.

Assignment part 1
Group work - Exhibition Design and implementation.

Assignment part 2
Individual project - 'live brief' - projects set by industry professionals, professional bodies or related organisations.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy:
Formative assessment will be achieved through seminars, group crits, tutorials, directed group work.

Summative assessment will be by presentation of group-work and/or portfolio submission.

Work requirements:
Your finished project will include:
- Moodboards showing your research and approaches.
- Detailed, intelligent research, extensive exploration and experimental development work demonstrating a variety of appropriate and original ideas narrowing down to the development of an outline structure for the piece.
- Group research bound together as one document.
- Exhibition name and Logo.
- Identity Guidelines/Toolkit.
- Boards expressing ideas and visuals for how the exhibition will look/work and related marketing and your direct mail materials.
- Type written rationale for the group, approx 250 words, 12pt (spellchecked), expressing your approach to the problem from initial ideas through to your final solution.
- Full attendance at taught sessions, seminars, crits and all tutorials.

Assessment submission requirements and deadlines:
You need to submit the requirements set out and one collated and bound record of research/experimentation/development work for the project.

Hand-in, Mon 20th Jan 2020. (time TBC).

All work should be mounted cleanly and professionally in one portfolio with pdf uploaded onto blackboard.
All boards should be carefully planned and considered.

Student feedback:
The course values student feedback. Please make sure you complete your module review form for this module. This will be made available at the end of the module and should be included in your portfolio.

Feedback info
Feedback will be given within 20 working days of submission.

How the work will be assessed:
Your work will be assessed against the following Learning Outcomes:

1. Knowledge and Understanding
Research, Experimentation And Development
- *Demonstrate a broad and in-depth investigation of the subject.*
- *Evidence an appropriate range and use of techniques, principles and approaches.*
- *Ensure the creative approach has been appropriately and effectively developed.*
Indicative Weighting - 25%

2. Intellectual Skills
Creative Solution
- *Demonstrate the ability to create original concepts.*
- *Evaluate and develop a unique solution, displaying coherence, creativity and imagination.*
- *Ensure the final outcome fully satisfies the demands of the brief.*
Indicative Weighting - 25%

3. Practical Skills
Technical Ability And Presentation
- *Demonstrate a command of design skills and craftsmanship.*
Apply an advanced level of technical proficiency and attention to detail.
- *Ensure the submission has been well organised and appropriately presented.*
Indicative Weighting - 25%

4. Transferable/Key Skills
Studentship
- *Demonstrate effective time management and personal commitment.*
- *Evidence critical self-analysis and personal reflection.*
- *Actively engage with programme and peer group.*
Indicative Weighting - 25%

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Appendix 2.1 Example of a Level 6 Module Guide from the BA (Hons) Graphic Design department at Northumbria University, 2019.

Br&ing

Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

Module information
Level 6, Semester 1, 2019
40 Credits - 400hrs of Study

Module title
GD6001 - Experiential & Collaborative Branding in Graphic Design

Module contacts
[redacted]

BA (Hons) GRAPHIC DESIGN & BRANDING

Assignment brief

"M__ Y_____ PRESENTS"

Discover, research, explore, create & resolve

The Ask - part one - 6 weeks:
You are required to design materials for an exciting upcoming exhibition based in the UK, the location and structure is up to you. You should however, consider how the location might add atmosphere or relevance to the final exhibition. The exhibition is primarily aimed at the general public, however, there is also to be a private view inviting public figures and/or celebrities.

The event that is the subject of the assignment and exhibition, will need to be thoroughly researched.

You will then be plan your research of the movement in order to develop plausible design approaches and define what your narrative will be. You will work in groups of no more than five.

The deliverables should include;
- *Exhibition title & logo*
- *Identity toolkit*
- *Visuals for the exhibition space/ layout/panels/content*
- *Signage/way finding*
- *Marketing materials such as posters, advertisements etc*
- *Private view invitation/direct mailer and/or teaser.*
- *250 word statement of the groups individual roles.*
- *A 12-15 page PDF presentation of the project and your research journey plus a collective body of research demonstrating your process and 200hrs of study each.*

All crits will require you to put work on the wall for discussion. If no work is produced for the timetabled crits valuable feedback will be lost as staff will only comment on tangible work that you present in your crit. It is your group's collective responsibility to ensure all work is completed for feedback. It is also important that you have reflected on the work and have your own opinions and conclusions and where necessary highlight any issues or problems you want to raise/ discuss in your session.

Study guide:

Week 1 *(w/c 30th September)*
- *Getting to grips with the brief.*
- *Take the given subject and build up a body of research.*

Week 2 (IMMERSION TRIP)
(w/c 7th October)
- *Develop a minimum of five plausible name options for the exhibition.*
- *Develop a minimum of two plausible narratives for your exhibition. (e.g. Approaching the exhibition from a particular creative route or telling a particular part of the story.)*
- *Research possible locations.*
- *Work to be presented clearly and neatly on paper, on the crit room wall.*

Week 3 *(w/c 17th October)*
- *Develop three name/identity/logo options for presentation.*
- *Develop visual stylings for your chosen approach in context to the exhibition space and/or location.*
- *Work to be presented clearly and neatly, on paper, attached to the crit room wall.*

Week 4 *(w/c 21st October)*
- *Refining the proposition and developing the approach and appropriate content.*
- *Create a visual toolkit to support your identity.*
- *Work to be presented clearly and neatly, on paper, attached to the crit room wall.*

Week 5 *(w/c 28th October)*
- *Refining the proposition and developing the approach and appropriate content.*
- *Concepts developed for your private view invitation/direct mail/posters idea etc.*
- *Work to be presented clearly and neatly, on paper, attached to the crit room wall.*

Week 6 *(w/c 4th November)*
Final presentation.
Work should be final visual stage to allow you the opportunity to make final amends from feedback before assessment hand in. Presentations should be planned and considered.

Deadline/timeline:
Hand-in, Monday 20th Jan 2020 (Time TBC).
All work should be mounted cleanly and professionally in one portfolio with pdf uploaded onto blackboard.
All boards should be carefully planned and considered.

Location guide:
Branding 3rd year Studio
LIPMAN 125/126
Branding crit room
Rm 109, First floor, Squires Workshops

Monday
Technical support/
Self Directed Learning

Tuesday
LIPMAN 125/126 - 3rd year
Branding Studio
Self Directed Learning

Wednesday
HIST and CRIT (TBC)

Thursday
LIPMAN 125/126 + SQW109 - 3rd year
Branding Studio (Crit space)
am *crit sessions*
9.00am - 1.00pm
pm *Studio support sessions*
2.00pm - 4.00pm

Friday
LIPMAN 125/126 - 3rd year
Branding Studio
Self Directed Learning

Appendix 2.2 Example of a Level 6 Project Brief from the BA (Hons) Graphic Design department at Northumbria University, 2019.

AOD Design starts here.

Visual Communication Design (HONS)

GD606 Experiential & Collaborative Branding

2019 // Level 6 // Semester 1
40 Credits = 400 hrs study

Module Tutor/ Contact info

[redacted]

GD606 **Experiential & Collaborative Branding**

MODULE GUIDE

Synopsis of module
To explore and develop an advanced knowledge and intellectual understanding of Branding for an environmental and experiential application, exploring customer journey, touch points and way-finding. To further develop team-working skills, through ongoing negotiation, coordination, task management and collaboration.

This module will also include intellectually stimulating and complex professional 'live briefs' - projects set by industry professionals, professional bodies, or related organisations.

The assessment will be based on the expertise, consideration, appropriateness and innovation to which students answer visually and intellectually complex design problems.

Assignment part 1
Individual project - 'live brief'
ISTD & D&AD

Assignment part 2
Group work - Exhibition Design and implementation.

Final Submission:
Wednesday may 15th

Final Presentattion:
Friday May 17th

No tutors will be present to accept work after this time

N.B. It is your responsibility to negotiate an extended deadline and to complete a Late Approved (LA) Submission Form, if appropriate. This must be negotiated through the School office and signed by your module tutor or programme leader in order to be valid. For serious circumstances it may be appropriate to submit a Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Form. You must have all relevant evidence (medical certificates etc) to attach to this form which can be collected, with guidance notes, from the School Office. Please refer to your School Handbook for further information.

Learning, Teaching & Assessment strategy
Formative assessment will be achieved through seminars, group crits, tutorials, directed group-work. Summative assessment will be by presentation of group-work and/or portfolio submission.

How the work will be assessed:
Work will be assessed by the following learning outcomes:

1. Knowledge and Understanding
RESEARCH, EXPERIMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT (20%)
- Demonstrate a broad and in-depth investigation of the subject.
- Evidence an appropriate range and use of techniques, principles and approaches.
- Ensure the creative approach has been appropriately and effectively developed.

2. Intellectual Skills
CREATIVE SOLUTION (50%)
- Demonstrate the ability to create original concepts
- Evaluate and develop a unique solution, displaying coherence, creativity and imagination.
- Ensure the final outcome fully satisfies the demands of the brief.

3. Practical Skills
TECHNICAL ABILITY AND PRESENTATION (20%)
- Demonstrate a command of design skills and craftsmanship.
- Apply an advanced level of technical proficiency.and attention to detail
- Ensure the submission has been well organised and appropriately presented.

4. Transferable/Key Skills
STUDENTSHIP (10%)
- Demonstrate effective time management and personal commitment.
- Evidence critical self-analysis and personal reflection.
- Actively engage with programme and peer group.

Work Requirements
The scope of work undertaken MUST be approved by staff team and equate to 400hrs of individual study for each assignment.

This is a 40 credit module.

Assessment Weight, Project 1= 50%
Assessment Weight, Project 2= 50%

Timeline
Competition Briefs
Weeks 1-8
Week 3 - Research & Concept
Week 6 - Prototyping
Week 8 - Execution Presentation

Weeks 9-15
Exhibition Brief
Week 11 - Research & Concept
Week 13 - Prototyping
Week 15 - Execution Presentation

Week 16 - submission

Indicative Reading List & Learning Resources
Books:

Locker, P. (2011) Exhibition design. Lausanne: AVA Academia.

Wheeler, A. (2012) Designing Brand Identity: An Essential Guide for the Whole Branding Team. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Millman. D. (2012) Brand Bible: The complete guide to building, designing and sustaining brands. Massachusetts: Rockport.

Online:

https://www.grafik.net/
Eye: The International Review of Graphic Design
Baseline: Journal of Typography
Creative Review
I.D.: The International Design Magazine
The Design Journal

Appendix 2.3 Example of a Level 6 Module Guide from the BA (Hons) Graphic Design department at AOD received from Northumbria University, 2019.

AOD Design starts here.

Visual Communication Design (HONS)

GD606 Experiential & Collaborative Branding

2019 // Level 6 // Semester 1
40 Credits = 400 hrs study

Module Tutor/ Contact info

[redacted]

Assignment 2 - Exhibit Design

EXHIBITION DESIGN
Research and explore the following subject. Over the course of the project, you are to become an expert on it.

You will then design an exciting upcoming exhibition, that will inspire, fascinate, and educate people in Colombo.

The selected location is the ***National Art Gallery***. Consider how the location might add atmosphere or relevance to the final exhibition.

The exhibition is primarily aimed at the general public, however, there is also to be a private viewing inviting public figures and/or celebrities.

This is a group project, groups will be assigned. Think of yourselves as a small start-up agency, this is your first project together. You will have to self organize, figure out each-other's strengths and opportunities.

You should carefully record and test the various ideas that you consider appropriate for developing your solution.

Topic of your exhibition will be:
A Sri Lankan retrospecive. A Retrospective (adj), meaning - *looking back on or dealing with past events or situations,* or in the context of art and design, *an exhibition or compilation showing the development of an artist's work over a period of time.* You will select a topic from the suggested list and research three distinct individuals or events which can be inlcuded in a Retrospective Showcase at the National Art Gallery. The three elements chosen will have to be thematically related, and from distinct time periods, preferably three separate decades. They should be relevant to or related to Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan culture or history, centred around:

- Art / Design
- Literature / Film
- Music / Dance

Target market
The exhibition is primarily aimed at the general public, however, there is also to be a private view inviting public figures and/or celebrities.

Deliverables
- Exhibition: title, logo, toolkit
- Space: pannels, interactive piece, wayfinding
- Promo: marketing materials, promotional items, ticket, invitation

- Individual design journals
- Peer evaluation form.
- Upload to AOD server: Standard NU submission boards for each member of the team + rationale

A minimum of 200 hours of study per person per assignment must be reflected in your final submission.

Exhibition Brief
Week 11 - Research & Concept
Week 13 - Prototyping
Week 15 - Execution Presentation

Deadline
Final Submission:
Wednesday May 17th

Please note, tutors reserve the right to take assessment action against any student who fails to adequately contribute to his/her group project, and provides no valid reason for doing so.

N.B. It is your responsibility to negotiate an extended deadline and to complete a Late Approved (LA) Submission Form, if appropriate. *See MG for more info.

Study guide:
1 Getting to grips with the brief.
2 Take the given subject and build up a body of research.
3 Develop a minimum of three plausible narratives for your exhibition. (e.g. Approaching the exhibition from a particular creative route or telling a particular part of the story.)
4 Research your location thoroughly, understand the space & ways of working with it.
5 Work to be presented clearly and neatly on paper or boards.
6 Develop visual stylings for your chosen approach in context to the exhibition space and/or location.
7 Refining the proposition and developing the approach and appropriate content.
8 Create a visual toolkit to support your identity
9 Consider the two audiences - opening and general invitation. Concepts developed for your private view invitation/direct mail/posters idea etc.
10 Final presentation. Work should be final visual stage to allow you the opportunity to make final amends from feedback before assessment hand in.

Presentations should be carefully planned out and considered - go beyond the page or slide. You are presenting a 3D and space design concept, consider 3D and the space around you when you present.

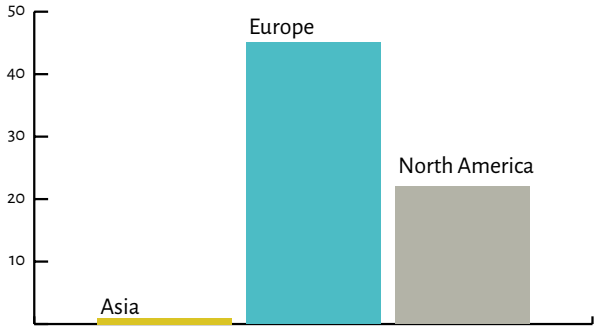
Appendix 2.4 Example of a Level 6 Project Brief from the BA (Hons) Graphic Design department at AOD with subject and content adapted for students based in Sri Lanka, 2019.

Title		Author/Organisation	Published In
1.	You are here: a new approach to signage and wayfinding	Victionary	Hong Kong
1.	The tender spot: the graphic design of Mario Lombardo	Mario Lombardo, Marie-Sophie Müller, Till Schröder, Gerrit Terstiege, Alfred Jansen	Germany
2.	Dynamic identities: how to create a living brand	Irene van Nes	Netherlands
3.	Know your onions: graphic design	Drew De Soto	Netherlands
4.	About face: reviving the rules of typography	David Jury	Switzerland
5.	Verbalising the visual: translating art and design into words	Michael Clarke	Switzerland
6.	Exhibition design	Pam Locker	Switzerland
7.	Packaging the brand: the relationship between packaging design and brand identity	Gavin Ambrose, Paul Harris	Switzerland
8.	Typography : a manual of design	Emil Ruder	Switzerland
9.	Excellent Dissertations!	Peter Levin	United Kingdom
10.	What is Graphic Design?	Quentin Newark	United Kingdom
11.	Writing on drawing: essays on drawing practice and research	Steve Garner	United Kingdom
12.	Communication design: insights from the creative industries	Derek Yates, Jessie Price	United Kingdom
13.	Graphic design process: from problem to solution : 20 case studies	Nancy Skolos, Thomas Wedell	United Kingdom
14.	Problem solved: how to recognize the nineteen recurring problems faced in design, branding and communication and how to solve them	Michael Johnson	United Kingdom
15.	Dialogue: relationships in graphic design	Shaun Cole	United Kingdom
16.	Brand new: the shape of brands to come	Wally Olins	United Kingdom
17.	A century of graphic design	Jeremy Aynsley	United Kingdom
18.	Modernism in design	Paul Greenhalgh	United Kingdom
19.	See red women's workshop	Prue Stevenson, Susan Mackie, Anne Robinson, Jess Baines	United Kingdom
20.	Left shift: radical art in 1970s Britain	John A. Walker	United Kingdom
21.	Spectacle of Women	Lisa Tickner	United Kingdom
22.	British Posters	Catherine Flood	United Kingdom
23.	Disobedient Objects	Catherine Flood, Gavin Grindon	United Kingdom
24.	The Magazine	Gwen Allen	United Kingdom
25.	Ways of seeing	John Berger	United Kingdom
26.	Postmodernism: New Classicism in Art and Architecture	Charles Jencks	United Kingdom
27.	Student's Guide to Preparing Dissertations and Theses	Brian Allison, Phil Race	United Kingdom
28.	Study Skills for Art, Design and Media Students	Stewart Dr Mann	United Kingdom
29.	Cite Them Right	Richard Pears, Graham Shields	United Kingdom
30.	Guerrilla advertising 2: more unconventional brand communication	Gavin Lucas	United Kingdom
31.	Exhibition design: an introduction	Philip Hughes	United Kingdom
32.	Wally Olins on brand	Wally Olins	United Kingdom
33.	Communication design: insights from the creative industries	Derek Yates, Jessie Price	United Kingdom
34.	A smile in the mind: witty thinking in graphic design	Beryl McAlhone, David Stuart, Greg Quinton, Nick Asbury	United Kingdom
35.	Sketchbooks: the hidden art of designers, illustrators and creatives	Richard Brereton	United Kingdom
36.	Extraordinary sketchbooks	Jane Stobart	United Kingdom
37.	I used to be a design student: then, now	Billy Kiosoglou, Frank Philippin	United Kingdom
38.	100 ideas that changed graphic design	Steven Heller, Véronique Vienne	United Kingdom
39.	The A-Z of visual ideas: how to solve any creative brief	John Ingledew	United Kingdom
40.	The art of color: the subjective experience and objective rationale of color	Johannes Itten, Ernst van Hagen	United Kingdom
41.	This means this, this means that: a user's guide to semiotics	Sean Hall	United Kingdom

Appendix 2.5 Suggested reading list for the Northumbria-AOD BA (Hons) Graphic Design Programme, 2019.

Title		Author/Organisation	Published In
42.	Essentials of visual communication	Bo Bergström	United Kingdom
43.	Marks of excellence: the history and taxonomy of trademarks	Per Mollerup	United Kingdom
44.	Typography sketchbooks	Steven Heller, Lita Talarico	United Kingdom
45.	Graphic design as communication	Malcolm Barnard	United Kingdom
1.	Brand Bible: the complete guide to building, designing, and sustaining brands	Debbie Millman	USA
2.	Color design workbook: a real-world guide to using color in graphic design	Terry Lee Stone, Sean Adams, Noreen Morioka, ProQuest	USA
3.	Semiotics: the basics	Daniel Chandler	USA
4.	Designing for the greater good: the best of cause-related marketing and nonprofit design	Peleg Top, Jonathan Cleveland	USA
5.	Geometry of design: studies in proportion and composition	Kimberly Elam	USA
6.	The language of graphic design: an illustrated handbook for understanding fundamental design principles	Richard Poulin	USA
7.	White space is not your enemy: a beginner's guide to communicating visually through graphic, web & multimedia design	Rebecca Hagen	USA
8.	Adjusted margin: xerography, art, and activism in the late twentieth century	Kate Eichhorn	USA
9.	An illustrated life: drawing inspiration from the private sketchbooks of artists, illustrators and designers	Danny Gregory	USA USA
10.	Design elements: form & space: a graphic style manual for understanding structure and design	Dennis Puhalla	USA
11.	Fanzines	Teal Triggs	USA
12.	Designing brand identity: an essential guide for the whole branding team	Alina Wheeler	USA
13.	Meggs' history of graphic design	Philip B. Meggs, Alston W. Purvis, Philip B. Meggs	USA
14.	Visual meetings: how graphics, sticky notes, and idea mapping can transform group productivity	David Sibbet, ProQuest	USA
15.	Graphic design history	Steven Heller, Georgette Ballance	USA
16.	Media and nostalgia: yearning for the past, present and future	Palgrave Macmillan	USA
17.	Design thinking: integrating innovation, customer experience and brand value	Thomas Lockwood	USA
18.	Design and form: the basic course at the Bauhaus and later	Johannes Itten, Bauhaus	USA
19.	Communication design: principles, methods, and practice	Jorge Frascara	USA
20.	Thinking with type: a critical guide for designers, writers, editors, & students	Ellen Lupton	USA
21.	Graphic design theory: readings from the field	Meredith Davis	USA
22.	Secrets for a Successful Dissertation	Jacqueline Fitzpatrick, Jan Secrist, Debra Wright	

Design and academic references by place of publication; 68 sources.



Appendix 2.5 Suggested reading list for the Northumbria-AOD BA (Hons) Graphic Design Programme, 2019.

PL Meeting March 4th

General intro
- Attendance report
- Student Surveys
- SSPC Semester 1 (wk of 18 March)
- AOD Press Release

S2 planning
- Dates
- Teachers
- Planning around the move

New paperwork Plan
- Example
- Personnel
- How to prepare
- Difficulties

Operational and scheduling issues
- 3 block system
- Increasing student numbers
- Facilities
- New programs (3D, Arch, Film, DT foundation)

CIT presentation and issues
- Plans
- Operating system
- Difficulties
- Suggestions
- equipment

Departmental events
- Next few (May 3rd, Graphic events April)
- What makes a successful event
- Supporting each other and our students
- Atypl
- Circo

SLDF partners and venues
- How little partnerships make big events easier
- Going over the plans again

Publicizing student work
- Kat (good practice)
- Let's do it

New Blog
- If you have stuff

Food service informed snacks on hand

Appendix 2.6 AOD Programme Leaders meeting agenda, Colombo, 2019.